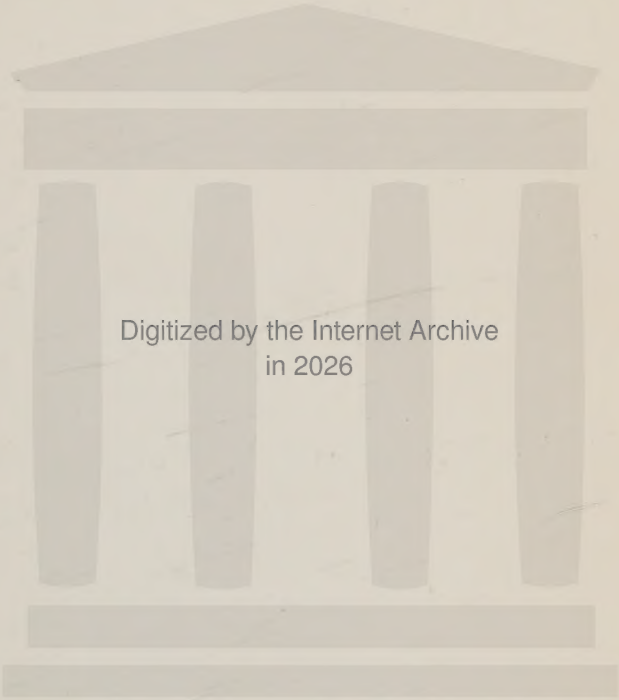
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By John Hay

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THE COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS
OF
JOHN HAY

John Hay

Household Edition

THE COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS OF JOHN HAY

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
CLARENCE L. HAY

Hay

BOOK

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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INTRODUCTION

THE avowed purpose of an Introduction is to introduce, and as the Pike County characters are already "bowing acquaintances" if not old friends of most readers, it is not necessary to dwell on their associations or antecedents.

There is an interesting allusion in a newspaper clipping which I recently came across in an old scrap-book: "Col. Thomas W. Knox, now on his way around the world, was told this story by an English gentleman in Tokio, Japan: The latter had attended, not long before, a dinner party in London, at which George Eliot was present, among other noted *littérateurs*. The conversation naturally turned upon the shop, and, referring to American authors, she pronounced John Hay's 'Jim Bludso' one of the finest gems in the English language. At the general request of the company she arose and recited the poem, the tears flowing from her eyes as she spoke the closing lines."

My father himself had a weakness for "Bludso" and he wrote to Mr. Joseph Bishop in 1889: " . . . I thoroughly appreciate a good word spoken for Jim, who is a friend of mine. I shudder and hide in the cellar only when the boy with the small knickerbockers is mentioned."

Though it amused him to write them, my father could never understand the popularity of his frontier sketches. He grew very tired of hearing them quoted, and even before 1880 he said that he "wished people would forget the Ballads," but half

a century has shown that these rough-hewn models of Western types are destined to outlive all his other poetical efforts.

The poems previously published in book form seem to need no further introductory mention, but it is the presence of the Uncollected Verses that gives this edition a peculiar interest. It has been hard to establish the chronological sequence of the "new poems," as my father was very reticent in talking of his verses, even with his family and closest friends. From evidence in hand, however, I have been able to determine the probable period of most of them.

On June 3, 1890, he sent "Love's Dawn" to Mr. R. W. Gilder, of the *Century*, with the following letter: "Here is a sonnet which I hope may find favor in the eyes of you — past-master of the sonnet. If you think it worth printing, it is yours, without money or price, on the condition it be printed anonymously. I am rather too old a bird to be singing in this strain. If you conclude to print it, tell me about when, and send me a proof." This was accepted, and appeared in the *Century Magazine* for September, 1890. "Compensation" was published in the same magazine in December, 1892. "Love and Music" appeared in *Harper's Monthly* in 1893 and "A Prayer in Thessaly" in a number of the *Century*, the same year. "Pæstum" and "Twilight on Sandusky Marsh" came out in *Harper's* in 1896. After 1896 I do not think that any poems of my father's were published in periodicals until 1904, when the *Century* printed "Thanatos Athanatos."

My father kept tucked away in a chest, known as "The Despatch-Box," a number of manuscripts which he never offered to the public. Of these about twenty appear in this

volume. A few others, which seemed either too rough in form or too occasional, have been left out.

The "Uncollected Pieces," with the exception of "Benoni Dunn" and "After you, Pilot," which apparently belong to an earlier period, and three others which will be referred to later, were written in the years from 1890 to 1896, the greater number during the first two years. After a decade and a half of infinite research, interesting to the worker, but involving much clerical labor and application to a single method, the *Life of Lincoln* was finished in 1890. There remained only the editing of the work. The greater number of the pieces in question were composed during the few years of comparative leisure following the completion of the author's greatest literary effort. We must therefore look upon them as born of the freedom in which the research worker suddenly found himself, and not written as a relaxation in the midst of his diplomatic assiduities.

In a letter to Mr. W. D. Howells, June 8, 1890, my father wrote: "I have had the impudence to collect all my verses, new and stale, into one volume, which Houghton & Mifflin have printed. . . . You will not suspect me of taking them too seriously in thus dressing them up. On the contrary, it is only the conscious amateur who does such things." From the fact that he submitted such a limited number of his later verses to the editors, it is evident that he took them even less seriously than those he mentions as forming this collected volume.

John Hay was by inclination an author. He loved to write, and wrote easily. His diplomatic career he considered an accident, or rather a chapter of accidents. When President McKinley appointed him Ambassador to Great Britain in 1897,

he was not in good health, and he went from a sense of duty, reluctantly. From that time on, diplomacy and affairs of state controlled his life. The poet sang no more songs, and rhymed no more ballads. I can find but three poems that were composed during his last years: "Peace," written in 1899 or 1900; "To Theodore Roosevelt," Christmas Eve, 1902; and "Thanatos Athanatos," published in June, 1904. His broken health, together with the bereavements which came to him in 1901, crushed his spirit, and had he wished, he could not have lightened his few leisure hours with verse-making.

> "At such a time Art sickens through the world,
> Song slumbers with lethargic pinions furled."

It was only during his early life that John Hay thought seriously of being a poet. The desire was clear in his undergraduate days at Brown, and in the "Poet in Exile" letters of 1858–60. It was still manifest in his war-time pieces, notably in "Rhymes," — from which I have just quoted, — written, I believe, in the White House. It is vain to conjecture what position he would have held in the world of letters if he had followed the inclinations of his youth. Fate took the choice out of his hands and turned the bard to first a writer, then a maker, of history. Though thoroughly suppressed, the poetic side of my father's nature ran as an undercurrent throughout his last years, and helped him in the many serious problems he was called upon to solve. But for the statesman in him, he would have been more a poet: but for the poet in him, he would have been less a statesman.

CLARENCE LEONARD HAY.

THE PIKE COUNTY BALLADS

JIM BLUDSO

OF THE PRAIRIE BELLE

Wall, no! I can't tell whar he lives,
Becase he don't live, you see;
Leastways, he's got out of the habit
Of livin' like you and me.
Whar have you been for the last three year
That you have n't heard folks tell
How Jimmy Bludso passed in his checks
The night of the Prairie Belle?

He were n't no saint, — them engineers
Is all pretty much alike, —
One wife in Natchez-under-the-Hill
And another one here, in Pike;
A keerless man in his talk was Jim,
And an awkward hand in a row,
But he never flunked, and he never lied, —
I reckon he never knowed how.

And this was all the religion he had, —
To treat his engine well;
Never be passed on the river;
To mind the pilot's bell;
And if ever the Prairie Belle took fire, —
A thousand times he swore,
He'd hold her nozzle agin the bank
Till the last soul got ashore.

All boats has their day on the Mississip,
And her day come at last, —
The Movastar was a better boat,
But the Belle she *would n't* be passed.
And so she come tearin' along that night —
The oldest craft on the line —
With a nigger squat on her safety-valve,
And her furnace crammed, rosin and pine.

The fire bust out as she clared the bar,
And burnt a hole in the night,
And quick as a flash she turned, and made
For that willer-bank on the right.

There was runnin' and cursin', but Jim yelled out,
Over all the infernal roar,
"I'll hold her nozzle agin the bank
Till the last galoot's ashore."

Through the hot, black breath of the burnin' boat
Jim Bludso's voice was heard,
And they all had trust in his cussedness,
And knowed he would keep his word.
And, sure's you're born, they all got off
Afore the smokestacks fell, —
And Bludso's ghost went up alone
In the smoke of the Prairie Belle.

He were n't no saint, — but at jedgment
I'd run my chance with Jim,
'Longside of some pious gentlemen
That would n't shook hands with him.
He seen his duty, a dead-sure thing, —
And went for it thar and then;
And Christ ain't a-going to be too hard
On a man that died for men.

LITTLE BREECHES

I DON'T go much on religion,
I never ain't had no show;
But I've got a middlin' tight grip, sir,
On the handful o' things I know.
I don't pan out on the prophets
And free-will, and that sort of thing, —
But I b'lieve in God and the angels,
Ever sence one night last spring.

I come into town with some turnips,
And my little Gabe come along, —
No four-year-old in the county
Could beat him for pretty and strong,
Peart and chipper and sassy,
Always ready to swear and fight, —
And I'd larnt him to chaw terbacker
Jest to keep his milk-teeth white.

The snow come down like a blanket
As I passed by Taggart's store;
I went in for a jug of molasses
And left the team at the door.
They scared at something and started, —
I heard one little squall,
And hell-to-split over the prairie
Went team, Little Breeches, and all.

Hell-to-split over the prairie!
I was almost froze with skeer;
But we rousted up some torches,
And sarched for 'em far and near.
At last we struck hosses and wagon,
Snowed under a soft white mound,
Upsot, dead beat, — but of little Gabe
No hide nor hair was found.

And here all hope soured on me,
Of my fellow-critter's aid, —

I jest flopped down on my marrow-bones,
Crotch-deep in the snow, and prayed.

. . . . . .

By this, the torches was played out,
And me and Isrul Parr
Went off for some wood to a sheepfold
That he said was somewhar thar.

We found it at last, and a little shed
Where they shut up the lambs at night.
We looked in and seen them huddled thar,
So warm and sleepy and white;
And thar sot Little Breeches and chirped,
As peart as ever you see,
"I want a chaw of terbacker,
And that's what's the matter of me."

How did he git thar? Angels.
He could never have walked in that storm;
They jest scooped down and toted him
To whar it was safe and warm.

And I think that saving a little child,
And fotching him to his own,
Is a derned sight better business
Than loafing around the Throne.

BANTY TIM

(REMARKS OF SERGEANT TILMON JOY TO THE WHITE MAN'S COMMITTEE OF SPUNKY POINT, ILLINOIS)

I RECKON I git your drift, gents, —
You 'low the boy sha'n't stay;
This is a white man's country;
You're Dimocrats, you say;
And whereas, and seein', and wherefore,
The times bein' all out o' j'int,
The nigger has got to mosey
From the limits o' Spunky P'int!

Le's reason the thing a minute:
I'm an old-fashioned Dimocrat too,
Though I laid my politics out o' the way
For to keep till the war was through.
But I come back here, allowin'
To vote as I used to do,

Though it gravels me like the devil to train
Along o' sich fools as you.

Now dog my cats ef I kin see,
In all the light of the day,
What you've got to do with the question
Ef Tim shill go or stay.
And furder than that I give notice,
Ef one of you tetches the boy,
He kin check his trunks to a warmer clime
Than he'll find in Illanoy.

Why, blame your hearts, jest hear me!
You know that ungodly day
When our left struck Vicksburg Heights, how ripped
And torn and tattered we lay.
When the rest retreated I stayed behind,
Fur reasons sufficient to me, —
With a rib caved in, and a leg on a strike,
I sprawled on that cursed glacee.

Lord! how the hot sun went for us,
And br'iled and blistered and burned!
How the Rebel bullets whizzed round us
When a cuss in his death-grip turned!
Till along toward dusk I seen a thing
I could n't believe for a spell:
That nigger — that Tim — was a-crawlin' to me
Through that fire-proof, gilt-edged hell!

The Rebels seen him as quick as me,
And the bullets buzzed like bees;
But he jumped for me, and shouldered me,
Though a shot brought him once to his knees;
But he staggered up, and packed me off,
With a dozen stumbles and falls,
Till safe in our lines he drapped us both,
His black hide riddled with balls.

So, my gentle gazelles, thar's my answer,
And here stays Banty Tim:
He trumped Death's ace for me that day,
And I'm not goin' back on him!

You may rezoloot till the cows come home,
But ef one of you tetches the boy,
He'll wrastle his hash to-night in hell,
Or my name's not Tilmon Joy.

THE MYSTERY OF GILGAL

The darkest, strangest mystery
I ever read, or heern, or see,
Is 'long of a drink at Taggart's Hall, —
Tom Taggart's of Gilgal.

I've heern the tale a thousand ways,
But never could git through the maze
That hangs around that queer day's doin's;
But I'll tell the yarn to youans.

Tom Taggart stood behind his bar,
The time was fall, the skies was fa'r,
The neighbors round the counter drawed,
And ca'mly drinked and jawed.

At last come Colonel Blood of Pike,
And old Jedge Phinn, permiscus-like,
And each, as he meandered in,
Remarked, "A whisky-skin."

Tom mixed the beverage full and fa'r,
And slammed it, smoking, on the bar.
Some says three fingers, some says two, —
I'll leave the choice to you.

Phinn to the drink put forth his hand;
Blood drawed his knife, with accent bland,
"I ax yer parding, Mister Phinn —
Jest drap that whisky-skin."

No man high-toneder could be found
Than old Jedge Phinn the country round.
Says he, "Young man, the tribe of Phinns
Knows their own whisky-skins!"

He went for his 'leven-inch bowie-knife: —
"I tries to foller a Christian life;
But I'll drap a slice of liver or two,
My bloomin' shrub, with you."

They carved in a way that all admired,
Tell Blood drawed iron at last, and fired.

It took Seth Bludso 'twixt the eyes,
Which caused him great surprise.

Then coats went off, and all went in;
Shots and bad language swelled the din;
The short, sharp bark of Derringers,
Like bull-pups, cheered the furse.

They piled the stiffs outside the door;
They made, I reckon, a cord or more.
Girls went that winter, as a rule,
Alone to spellin'-school.

I've sarched in vain, from Dan to Beer-
Sheba, to make this mystery clear;
But I end with *hit* as I did begin, —
"WHO GOT THE WHISKY-SKIN?"

GOLYER

Ef the way a man lights out of this world
Helps fix his heft for the other sp'ere,
I reckon my old friend Golyer's Ben
Will lay over lots of likelier men
For one thing he done down here.

You did n't know Ben? He driv a stage
On the line they called the Old Sou'-west;
He wa'n't the best man that ever you seen,
And he wa'n't so ungodly pizen mean, —
No better nor worse than the rest.

He was hard on women and rough on his friends;
And he did n't have many, I'll let you know;
He hated a dog and disgusted a cat,
But he'd run off his legs for a motherless brat,
And I guess there's many jess so.

I've seed my sheer of the run of things,
I've hoofed it a many and many a miled,

But I never seed nothing that could or can
Jest git all the good from the heart of a man
  Like the hands of a little child.

Well! this young one I started to tell you about, —
  His folks was all dead, I was fetchin' him through, —
He was just at the age that's loudest for boys,
And he blowed such a horn with his sarchin' small voice,
  We called him "the Little Boy Blue."

He ketched a sight of Ben on the box,
  And you bet he bawled and kicked and howled,
For to git 'long of Ben, and ride thar too;
I tried to tell him it would n't do,
  When suddingly Golyer growled,

"What's the use of making the young one cry?
  Say, what's the use of being a fool?
Sling the little one up here whar he can see,
He won't git the snuffles a-ridin' with me, —
  The night ain't any too cool."

The child hushed cryin' the minute he spoke;
"Come up here, Major! don't let him slip."
And jest as nice as a woman could do,
He wropped his blanket around them two,
And was off in the crack of a whip.

We rattled along an hour or so,
Till we heerd a yell on the still night air.
Did you ever hear an Apache yell?
Well, ye need n't want to, *this* side of hell;
There's nothing more devilish there.

Caught in the shower of lead and flint
We felt the old stage stagger and plunge;
Then we heerd the voice and the whip of Ben,
As he gethered his critters up again,
And tore away with a lunge.

The passengers laughed. "Old Ben's all right,
He's druv five year and never was struck."
"Now if *I* 'd been thar, as sure as you live,

They'd 'a' plugged me with holes as thick as a sieve;
It's the reg'lar Golyer luck."

Over hill and holler and ford and creek
Jest like the hosses had wings, we tore;
We got to Looney's, and Ben come in
And laid down the baby and axed for his gin,
And dropped in a heap on the floor.

Said he, "When they fired, I kivered the kid, —
Although I ain't pretty, I'm middlin' broad;
And look! he ain't fazed by arrow nor ball, —
Thank God! my own carcase stopped them all."
Then we seen his eye glaze, and his lower jaw fall, —
And he carried his thanks to God.

THE PLEDGE AT SPUNKY POINT

A TALE OF EARNEST EFFORT AND HUMAN PERFIDY

It's all very well for preachin',
But preachin' and practice don't gee:
I've give the thing a fair trial,
And you can't ring it in on me.
So toddle along with your pledge, Squire,
Ef that's what you want me to sign;
Betwixt me and you, I've been thar,
And I'll not take any in mine.

A year ago last Fo'th July
A lot of the boys was here.
We all got corned and signed the pledge
For to drink no more that year.
There was Tilmon Joy and Sheriff McPhail
And me and Abner Fry,
And Shelby's boy Leviticus
And the Golyers, Luke and Cy.

And we anteed up a hundred
In the hands of Deacon Kedge
For to be divided the follerin' Fo'th
'Mongst the boys that kep' the pledge.
And we knowed each other so well, Squire,
You may take my scalp for a fool,
Ef every man when he signed his name
Did n't feel cock-sure of the pool.

Fur a while it all went lovely;
We put up a job next day
Fur to make Joy b'lieve his wife was dead,
And he went home middlin' gay;
Then Abner Fry he killed a man
And afore he was hung McPhail
Jest bilked the widder outen her sheer
By getting him slewed in jail.

But Chris'mas scooped the Sheriff,
The egg-nogs gethered him in;
And Shelby's boy Leviticus
Was, New Year's, tight as sin;

And along in March the Golyers
Got so drunk that a fresh-biled owl
Would 'a' looked 'long-side o' them two young men,
Like a sober temperance fowl.

Four months alone I walked the chalk,
I thought my heart would break;
And all them boys a-slappin' my back
And axin', "What 'll you take?"
I never slep' without dreamin' dreams
Of Burbin, Peach, or Rye,
But I chawed at my niggerhead and swore
I'd rake that pool or die.

At last — the Fo'th — I humped myself
Through chores and breakfast soon,
Then scooted down to Taggart's store —
For the pledge was off at noon;
And all the boys was gethered thar,
And each man hilt his glass —
Watchin' me and the clock quite solemn-like
Fur to see the last minute pass.

The clock struck twelve! I raised the jug
And took one lovin' pull —
I was holler clar from skull to boots,
It seemed I could n't git full.
But I was roused by a fiendish laugh
That might have raised the dead —
Them ornary sneaks had sot the clock
A half an hour ahead!

"All right!" I squawked. "You've got me,
Jest order your drinks agin,
And we'll paddle up to the Deacon's
And scoop the ante in."
But when we got to Kedge's,
What a sight was that we saw!
The Deacon and Parson Skeeters
In the tail of a game of Draw.

They had shook 'em the heft of the mornin',
The Parson's luck was fa'r,
And he raked, the minute we got thar,
The last of our pool on a pa'r.

So toddle along with your pledge, Squire,
I 'low it's all very fine,
But ez fur myself, I thank ye,
I'll not take any in mine.

WANDERLIEDER

SUNRISE IN THE PLACE DE LA CONCORDE

(PARIS, AUGUST, 1865)

I STAND at the break of day
In the Champs Élysées.
The tremulous shafts of dawning
As they shoot o'er the Tuileries early,
Strike Luxor's cold gray spire,
And wild in the light of the morning
With their marble manes on fire,
Ramp the white Horses of Marly.

But the Place of Concord lies
Dead hushed 'neath the ashy skies.
And the Cities sit in council
With sleep in their wide stone eyes.
I see the mystic plain
Where the army of spectres slain
In the Emperor's life-long war

March on with unsounding tread
To trumpets whose voice is dead.
Their spectral chief still leads them, —
The ghostly flash of his sword
Like a comet through mist shines far, —
And the noiseless host is poured,
For the gendarme never heeds them,
Up the long dim road where thundered
The army of Italy onward
Through the great pale Arch of the Star!

The spectre army fades
Far up the glimmering hill,
But, vaguely lingering still,
A group of shuddering shades
Infects the pallid air,
Growing dimmer as day invades
The hush of the dusky square.
There is one that seems a King,
As if the ghost of a Crown
Still shadowed his jail-bleached hair;

I can hear the guillotine ring,
As its regicide note rang there,
When he laid his tired life down
And grew brave in his last despair.
And a woman frail and fair
Who weeps at leaving a world
Of love and revel and sin
In the vast Unknown to be hurled;
(For life was wicked and sweet
With kings at her small white feet!)
And one, every inch a Queen,
In life and in death a Queen,
Whose blood baptized the place,
In the days of madness and fear, —
Her shade has never a peer
In majesty and grace.

Murdered and murderers swarm;
Slayers that slew and were slain,
Till the drenched place smoked with the rain
That poured in a torrent warm, —

Till red as the Rider's of Edom
Were splashed the white garments of Freedom
With the wash of the horrible storm!

And Liberty's hands were not clean
In the day of her pride unchained,
Her royal hands were stained
With the life of a King and Queen;
And darker than that with the blood
Of the nameless brave and good
Whose blood in witness clings
More damning than Queens' and Kings'.

Has she not paid it dearly?
Chained, watching her chosen nation
Grinding late and early
In the mills of usurpation?
Have not her holy tears
Flowing through shameful years,
Washed the stains from her tortured hands?
We thought so when God's fresh breeze,

Blowing over the sleeping lands,
In 'Forty-Eight waked the world,
And the Burgher-King was hurled
From that palace behind the trees.

As Freedom with eyes aglow
Smiled glad through her childbirth pain,
How was the mother to know
That her woe and travail were vain?
A smirking servant smiled
When she gave him her child to keep;
Did she know he would strangle the child
As it lay in his arms asleep?

Liberty's cruellest shame!
She is stunned and speechless yet.
In her grief and bloody sweat
Shall we make her trust her blame?
The treasure of 'Forty-Eight
A lurking jail-bird stole,
She can but watch and wait
As the swift sure seasons roll.

And when in God's good hour
Comes the time of the brave and true,
Freedom again shall rise
With a blaze in her awful eyes
That shall wither this robber-power
As the sun now dries the dew.
This Place shall roar with the voice
Of the glad triumphant people,
And the heavens be gay with the chimes
Ringing with jubilant noise
From every clamorous steeple
The coming of better times.
And the dawn of Freedom waking
Shall fling its splendors far
Like the day which now is breaking
On the great pale Arch of the Star,
And back o'er the town shall fly,
While the joy-bells wild are ringing,
To crown the Glory springing
From the Column of July!

THE SPHINX OF THE TUILERIES

Out of the Latin Quarter
I came to the lofty door
Where the two marble Sphinxes guard
The Pavillon de Flore.
Two Cockneys stood by the gate, and one
Observed, as they turned to go,
"No wonder He likes that sort of thing, —
He's a Sphinx himself, you know."

I thought as I walked where the garden glowed
In the sunset's level fire,
Of the Charlatan whom the Frenchmen loathe
And the Cockneys all admire.
They call him a Sphinx, — it pleases him, —
And if we narrowly read,
We will find some truth in the flunkey's praise, —
The man is a Sphinx indeed.

For the Sphinx with breast of woman
And face so debonair
Had the sleek false paws of a lion,
That could furtively seize and tear.
So far to the shoulders, — but if you took
The Beast in reverse you would find
The ignoble form of a craven cur
Was all that lay behind.

She lived by giving to simple folk
A silly riddle to read,
And when they failed she drank their blood
In cruel and ravenous greed.
But at last came one who knew her word,
And she perished in pain and shame, —
This bastard Sphinx leads the same base life
And his end will be the same.

For an Œdipus-People is coming fast
With swelled feet limping on,
If they shout his true name once aloud
His false foul power is gone.

Afraid to fight and afraid to fly,
He cowers in an abject shiver;
The people will come to their own at last, —
God is not mocked forever.

THE SURRENDER OF SPAIN

I

Land of unconquered Pelayo! land of the Cid Campeador!
Sea-girdled mother of men! Spain, name of glory and power;
Cradle of world-grasping Emperors, grave of the reckless invader,
How art thou fallen, my Spain! how art thou sunk at this hour!

II

Once thy magnanimous sons trod, victors, the portals of Asia,
Once the Pacific waves rushed, joyful thy banners to see;
For it was Trajan that carried the battle-flushed eagles to Dacia,
Cortés that planted thy flag fast by the uttermost sea.

III

Hast thou forgotten those days illumined with glory and honor,
When the far isles of the sea thrilled to the tread of Castile?
When every land under Heaven was flecked by the shade of thy banner, —
When every beam of the sun flashed on thy conquering steel?

IV

Then through red fields of slaughter, through death and defeat and disaster,
Still flared thy banner aloft, tattered, but free from a stain, —
Now to the upstart Savoyard thou bendest to beg for a master!
How the red flush of her shame mars the proud beauty of Spain!

V

Has the red blood run cold that boiled by the Xenil and
Darro?
Are the high deeds of the sires sung to the children no
more?
On the dun hills of the North hast thou heard of no
plough-boy Pizarro?
Roams no young swine-herd Cortés hid by the Tagus'
wild shore?

VI

Once again does Hispania bend low to the yoke of the
stranger!
Once again will she rise, flinging her gyves in the sea!
Princeling of Piedmont! unwitting thou weddest with
doubt and with danger,
King over men who have learned all that it costs to be
free.

THE PRAYER OF THE ROMANS

Not done, but near its ending,
Is the work that our eyes desired;
Not yet fulfilled, but near the goal,
Is the hope that our worn hearts fired.
And on the Alban Mountains,
Where the blushes of dawn increase,
We see the flash of the beautiful feet
Of Freedom and of Peace!

How long were our fond dreams baffled! —
Novara's sad mischance,
The Kaiser's sword and fetter-lock,
And the traitor stab of France;
Till at last came glorious Venice,
In storm and tempest home;
And now God maddens the greedy kings,
And gives to her people Rome.

Lame Lion of Caprera!
Red-shirts of the lost campaigns!
Not idly shed was the costly blood
You poured from generous veins.
For the shame of Aspromonte,
And the stain of Mentana's sod,
But forged the curse of kings that sprang
From your breaking hearts to God!

We lift our souls to thee, O Lord
Of Liberty and of Light!
Let not earth's kings pollute the work
That was done in their despite;
Let not thy light be darkened
In the shade of a sordid crown,
Nor pampered swine devour the fruit
Thou shook'st with an earthquake down!

Let the People come to their birthright,
And crosier and crown pass away
Like phantasms that flit o'er the marshes
At the glance of the clean, white day.

And then from the lava of Ætna
To the ice of the Alps let there be
One freedom, one faith without fetters,
One republic in Italy free!

THE CURSE OF HUNGARY

King Saloman looked from his donjon bars,
Where the Danube clamors through sedge and sand,
And he cursed with a curse his revolting land, —
With a king's deep curse of treason and wars.

He said: "May this false land know no truth!
May the good hearts die and the bad ones flourish,
And a greed of glory but live to nourish
Envy and hate in its restless youth.

"In the barren soil may the ploughshare rust,
While the sword grows bright with its fatal labor,
And blackens between each man and neighbor
The perilous cloud of a vague distrust!

"Be the noble idle, the peasant in thrall,
And each to the other as unknown things,
That with links of hatred and pride the kings
May forge firm fetters through each for all!

"May a king wrong them as they wronged their king!
May he wring their hearts as they wrung mine,
Till they pour their blood for his revels like wine,
And to women and monks their birthright fling!"

The mad king died; but the rushing river
Still brawls by the spot where his donjon stands,
And its swift waves sigh to the conscious sands
That the curse of King Saloman works forever.

For flowing by Pressbourg they heard the cheers
Ring out from the leal and cheated hearts
That were caught and chained by Theresa's arts, —
A man's cool head and a girl's hot tears!

And a star, scarce risen, they saw decline,
Where Orsova's hills looked coldly down,
As Kossuth buried the Iron Crown
And fled in the dark to the Turkish line.

And latest they saw in the summer glare
The Magyar nobles in pomp arrayed,

To shout as they saw, with his unfleshed blade,
A Hapsburg beating the harmless air.

But ever the same sad play they saw,
The same weak worship of sword and crown,
The noble crushing the humble down,
And moulding Wrong to a monstrous Law.

The donjon stands by the turbid river,
But Time is crumbling its battered towers;
And the slow light withers a despot's powers,
And a mad king's curse is not forever!

THE MONKS OF BASLE

I TORE this weed from the rank, dark soil
Where it grew in the monkish time,
I trimmed it close and set it again
In a border of modern rhyme.

I

Long years ago, when the Devil was loose
And faith was sorely tried,
Three monks of Basle went out to walk
In the quiet eventide.

A breeze as pure as the breath of Heaven
Blew fresh through the cloister-shades,
A sky as glad as the smile of Heaven
Blushed rose o'er the minster-glades.

But scorning the lures of summer and sense,
The monks passed on in their walk;

Their eyes were abased, their senses slept,
  Their souls were in their talk.

In the tough grim talk of the monkish days
  They hammered and slashed about, —
Dry husks of logic, — old scraps of creed, —
  And the cold gray dreams of doubt, —

And whether Just or Justified
  Was the Church's mystic Head, —
And whether the Bread was changed to God,
  Or God became the Bread.

But of human hearts outside their walls
  They never paused to dream,
And they never thought of the love of God
  That smiled in the twilight gleam.

II

As these three monks went bickering on
  By the foot of a spreading tree,

Out from its heart of verdurous gloom
A song burst wild and free, —

A wordless carol of life and love,
Of nature free and wild;
And the three monks paused in the evening shade,
Looked up at each other and smiled.

And tender and gay the bird sang on,
And cooed and whistled and trilled,
And the wasteful wealth of life and love
From his happy heart was spilled.

The song had power on the grim old monks
In the light of the rosy skies;
And as they listened the years rolled back,
And tears came into their eyes.

The years rolled back and they were young,
With the hearts and hopes of men,
They plucked the daisies and kissed the girls
Of dear dead summers again.

III

But the eldest monk soon broke the spell;
"'T is sin and shame," quoth he,
"To be turned from talk of holy things
By a bird's cry from a tree.

"Perchance the Enemy of Souls
Hath come to tempt us so.
Let us try by the power of the Awful Word
If it be he, or no!"

To Heaven the three monks raised their hands.
"We charge thee, speak!" they said,
"By His dread Name who shall one day come
To judge the quick and the dead, —

"Who art thou? Speak!" The bird laughed loud.
"I am the Devil," he said.
The monks on their faces fell, the bird
Away through the twilight sped.

A horror fell on those holy men,
(The faithful legends say,)
And one by one from the face of earth
They pined and vanished away.

IV

So goes the tale of the monkish books,
The moral who runs may read, —
He has no ears for Nature's voice
Whose soul is the slave of creed.

Not all in vain with beauty and love
Has God the world adorned;
And he who Nature scorns and mocks,
By Nature is mocked and scorned.

THE ENCHANTED SHIRT

Fytte the First: *wherein it shall be shown how the Truth is too mighty a Drug for such as be of feeble temper*

The King was sick. His cheek was red
And his eye was clear and bright;
He ate and drank with a kingly zest,
And peacefully snored at night.

But he said he was sick, and a king should know,
And doctors came by the score.
They did not cure him. He cut off their heads
And sent to the schools for more.

At last two famous doctors came,
And one was as poor as a rat, —
He had passed his life in studious toil,
And never found time to grow fat.

The other had never looked in a book;
His patients gave him no trouble,

If they recovered they paid him well,
  If they died their heirs paid double.

Together they looked at the royal tongue,
  As the King on his couch reclined;
In succession they thumped his august chest,
  But no trace of disease could find.

The old sage said, "You're as sound as a nut."
  "Hang him up," roared the King in a gale, —
In a ten-knot gale of royal rage;
  The other leech grew a shade pale;

But he pensively rubbed his sagacious nose,
  And thus his prescription ran, —
The King will be well, if he sleeps one night
  In the Shirt of a Happy Man.

Fytte the Second: *tells of the search for the Shirt and how it was nigh found but was not, for reasons which are said or sung*

Wide o'er the realm the couriers rode,
  And fast their horses ran,

And many they saw, and to many they spoke,
But they found no Happy Man.

They found poor men who would fain be rich,
And rich who thought they were poor;
And men who twisted their waists in stays,
And women that shorthose wore.

They saw two men by the roadside sit,
And both bemoaned their lot;
For one had buried his wife, he said,
And the other one had not.

At last as they came to a village gate,
A beggar lay whistling there;
He whistled and sang and laughed and rolled
On the grass in the soft June air.

The weary couriers paused and looked
At the scamp so blithe and gay;
And one of them said, "Heaven save you, friend!
You seem to be happy to-day."

"Oh, yes, fair sirs," the rascal laughed,
And his voice rang free and glad,
"An idle man has so much to do
That he never has time to be sad."

"This is our man," the courier said;
"Our luck has led us aright.
I will give you a hundred ducats, friend,
For the loan of your shirt to-night."

The merry blackguard lay back on the grass,
And laughed till his face was black;
"I would do it, God wot," and he roared with the fun,
"But I have n't a shirt to my back."

Fytte the Third: *shewing how His Majesty the King came at last to sleep in a Happy Man his Shirt*

Each day to the King the reports came in
Of his unsuccessful spies,
And the sad panorama of human woes
Passed daily under his eyes.

And he grew ashamed of his useless life,
And his maladies hatched in gloom;
He opened his windows and let the air
Of the free heaven into his room.

And out he went in the world and toiled
In his own appointed way;
And the people blessed him, the land was glad,
And the King was well and gay.

A WOMAN'S LOVE

A SENTINEL angel sitting high in glory
Heard this shrill wail ring out from Purgatory:
"Have mercy, mighty angel, hear my story!

"I loved, — and, blind with passionate love, I fell.
Love brought me down to death, and death to Hell.
For God is just, and death for sin is well.

"I do not rage against his high decree,
Nor for myself do ask that grace shall be;
But for my love on earth who mourns for me.

"Great Spirit! Let me see my love again
And comfort him one hour, and I were fain
To pay a thousand years of fire and pain."

Then said the pitying angel, "Nay, repent
That wild vow! Look, the dial-finger's bent
Down to the last hour of thy punishment!"

But still she wailed, "I pray thee, let me go!
I cannot rise to peace and leave him so.
Oh, let me soothe him in his bitter woe!"

The brazen gates ground sullenly ajar,
And upward, joyous, like a rising star,
She rose and vanished in the ether far.

But soon adown the dying sunset sailing,
And like a wounded bird her pinions trailing,
She fluttered back, with broken-hearted wailing.

She sobbed, "I found him by the summer sea
Reclined, his head upon a maiden's knee, —
She curled his hair and kissed him. Woe is me!"

She wept, "Now let my punishment begin!
I have been fond and foolish. Let me in
To expiate my sorrow and my sin."

The angel answered, "Nay, sad soul, go higher!
To be deceived in your true heart's desire
Was bitterer than a thousand years of fire!"

ON PITZ LANGUARD

I stood on the top of Pitz Languard,
And heard three voices whispering low,
Where the Alpine birds in their circling ward
Made swift dark shadows upon the snow.

FIRST VOICE

I loved a girl with truth and pain,
She loved me not. When she said good-by
She gave me a kiss to sting and stain
My broken life to a rosy dye.

SECOND VOICE

I loved a woman with love well tried, —
And I swear I believe she loves me still.
But it was not I who stood by her side
When she answered the priest and said "I will."

THIRD VOICE

I loved two girls, one fond, one shy,
And I never divined which one loved me.
One married, and now, though I can't tell why,
Of the four in the story I count but three.

The three weird voices whispered low
Where the eagles swept in their circling ward;
But only one shadow scarred the snow
As I clambered down from Pitz Languard.

BOUDOIR PROPHECIES

One day in the Tuileries,
When a southwest Spanish breeze
Brought scandalous news of the Queen,
The fair proud Empress said,
"My good friend loses her head;
If matters go on this way,
I shall see her shopping, some day,
In the Boulevard des Capucines."

The saying swiftly went
To the Place of the Orient,
And the stout Queen sneered, "Ah, well!
You are proud and prude, ma belle!
But I think I will hazard a guess
I shall see you one day playing chess
With the Curé of Carabanchel."

Both ladies, though not over-wise,
Were lucky in prophecies.

For the Boulevard shopmen well
Know the form of stout Isabel
As she buys her modes de Paris;
And after Sedan in despair
The Empress prude and fair
Went to visit Madame sa Mère
In her villa at Carabanchel —
But the Queen was not there to see.

A TRIUMPH OF ORDER

A SQUAD of regular infantry
In the Commune's closing days,
Had captured a crowd of rebels
By the wall of Père-la-Chaise.

There were desperate men, wild women,
And dark-eyed Amazon girls,
And one little boy, with a peach-down cheek
And yellow clustering curls.

The captain seized the little waif,
And said, "What dost thou here?"
"Sapristi, Citizen captain!
I'm a Communist, my dear!"

"Very well! Then you die with the others!"
— "Very well! That's my affair;
But first let me take to my mother,
Who lives by the wine-shop there,

"My father's watch. You see it;
A gay old thing, is it not?
It would please the old lady to have it,
Then I'll come back here, and be shot."

"That is the last we shall see of him,"
The grizzled captain grinned,
As the little man skimmed down the hill,
Like a swallow down the wind.

For the joy of killing had lost its zest
In the glut of those awful days,
And Death writhed, gorged like a greedy snake,
From the Arch to Père-la-Chaise.

But before the last platoon had fired,
The child's shrill voice was heard;
"Houp-là! the old girl made such a row
I feared I should break my word."

Against the bullet-pitted wall
He took his place with the rest,

A button was lost from his ragged blouse,
Which showed his soft white breast.

"Now blaze away, my children!
With your little one-two-three!"
The Chassepots tore the stout young heart,
And saved Society.

ERNST OF EDELSHEIM

I'll tell the story, kissing
This white hand for my pains:
No sweeter heart, nor falser
E'er filled such fine, blue veins.

I'll sing a song of true love,
My Lilith dear! to you;
Contraria contrariis —
The rule is old and true.

The happiest of all lovers
Was Ernst of Edelsheim;
And why he was the happiest,
I'll tell you in my rhyme.

One summer night he wandered
Within a lonely glade,
And, couched in moss and moonlight,
He found a sleeping maid.

The stars of midnight sifted
Above her sands of gold;
She seemed a slumbering statue,
So fair and white and cold.

Fair and white and cold she lay
Beneath the starry skies;
Rosy was her waking
Beneath the Ritter's eyes.

He won her drowsy fancy,
He bore her to his towers,
And swift with love and laughter
Flew morning's purpled hours.

But when the thickening sunbeams
Had drunk the gleaming dew,
A misty cloud of sorrow
Swept o'er her eyes' deep blue.

She hung upon the Ritter's neck,
She wept with love and pain,

She showered her sweet, warm kisses
Like fragrant summer rain.

"I am no Christian soul," she sobbed,
As in his arms she lay;
"I'm half the day a woman,
A serpent half the day.

"And when from yonder bell-tower
Rings out the noonday chime,
Farewell! farewell forever,
Sir Ernst of Edelsheim!"

"Ah! not farewell forever!"
The Ritter wildly cried,
"I will be saved or lost with thee,
My lovely Wili-Bride!"

Loud from the lordly bell-tower
Rang out the noon of day,
And from the bower of roses
A serpent slid away.

But when the mid-watch moonlight
Was shimmering through the grove,
He clasped his bride thrice dowered
With beauty and with love.

The happiest of all lovers
Was Ernst of Edelsheim —
His true love was a serpent
Only half the time!

MY CASTLE IN SPAIN

THERE was never a castle seen
So fair as mine in Spain:
It stands embowered in green,
Crowning the gentle slope
Of a hill by the Xenil's shore,
And at eve its shade flaunts o'er
The storied Vega plain,
And its towers are hid in the mists of Hope;
And I toil through years of pain
Its glimmering gates to gain.

In visions wild and sweet
Sometimes its courts I greet:
Sometimes in joy its shining halls
I tread with favored feet;
But never my eyes in the light of day
Were blest with its ivied walls,

Where the marble white and the granite gray
Turn gold alike when the sunbeams play,
When the soft day dimly falls.

I know in its dusky rooms
Are treasures rich and rare;
The spoil of Eastern looms,
And whatever of bright and fair
Painters divine have caught and won
From the vault of Italy's air:
White gods in Phidian stone
People the haunted glooms;
And the song of immortal singers
Like a fragrant memory lingers,
I know, in the echoing rooms.

But nothing of these, my soul!
Nor castle, nor treasures, nor skies,
Nor the waves of the river that roll
With a cadence faint and sweet
In peace by its marble feet —

Nothing of these is the goal
For which my whole heart sighs.
'T is the pearl gives worth to the shell —
The pearl I would die to gain;
For there does my lady dwell,
My love that I love so well —
The Queen whose gracious reign
Makes glad my Castle in Spain.

Her face so pure and fair
Sheds light in the shady places,
And the spell of her girlish graces
Holds charmed the happy air.
A breath of purity
Forever before her flies,
And ill things cease to be
In the glance of her honest eyes.
Around her pathway flutter,
Where her dear feet wander free
In youth's pure majesty,
The wings of the vague desires;

But the thought that love would utter
In reverence expires.

Not yet! not yet shall I see
That face which shines like a star
O'er my storm-swept life afar,
Transfigured with love for me.
Toiling, forgetting, and learning
With labor and vigils and prayers,
Pure heart and resolute will,
At last I shall climb the hill
And breathe the enchanted airs
Where the light of my life is burning
Most lovely and fair and free,
Where alone in her youth and beauty,
And bound by her fate's sweet duty,
Unconscious she waits for me.

SISTER SAINT LUKE

She lived shut in by flowers and trees
And shade of gentle bigotries.
On this side lay the trackless sea,
On that the great world's mystery;
But all unseen and all unguessed
They could not break upon her rest.
The world's far splendors gleamed and flashed,
Afar the wild seas foamed and dashed;
But in her small, dull Paradise,
Safe housed from rapture or surprise,
Nor day nor night had power to fright
The peace of God that filled her eyes.

NEW AND OLD

MILES KEOGH'S HORSE

On the bluff of the Little Big-Horn,
At the close of a woful day,
Custer and his Three Hundred
In death and silence lay.

Three Hundred to three Thousand!
They had bravely fought and bled;
For such is the will of Congress
When the White man meets the Red.

The White men are ten millions,
The thriftiest under the sun;
The Reds are fifty thousand,
And warriors every one.

So Custer and all his fighting men
Lay under the evening skies,
Staring up at the tranquil heaven
With wide, accusing eyes.

And of all that stood at noonday
In that fiery scorpion ring,
Miles Keogh's horse at evening
Was the only living thing.

Alone from that field of slaughter,
Where lay the three hundred slain,
The horse Comanche wandered,
With Keogh's blood on his mane.

And Sturgis issued this order,
Which future times shall read,
While the love and honor of comrades
Are the soul of the soldier's creed.

He said —

Let the horse Comanche
Henceforth till he shall die,
Be kindly cherished and cared for
By the Seventh Cavalry.

He shall do no labor; he never shall know
The touch of spur or rein;
Nor shall his back be ever crossed
By living rider again.

And at regimental formation
Of the Seventh Cavalry,
Comanche draped in mourning and led
By a trooper of Company I,

Shall parade with the Regiment!
Thus it was
Commanded and thus done,
By order of General Sturgis, signed
By Adjutant Garlington.

Even as the sword of Custer,
In his disastrous fall,
Flashed out a blaze that charmed the world
And glorified his pall,

This order, issued amid the gloom
That shrouds our army's name,
When all foul beasts are free to rend
And tear its honest fame,

Shall prove to a callous people
That the sense of a soldier's worth,
That the love of comrades, the honor of arms,
Have not yet perished from earth.

THE ADVANCE GUARD

In the dream of the Northern poets,
The brave who in battle die
Fight on in shadowy phalanx
In the field of the upper sky;
And as we read the sounding rhyme,
The reverent fancy hears
The ghostly ring of the viewless swords
And the clash of the spectral spears.

We think with imperious questionings
Of the brothers whom we have lost,
And we strive to track in death's mystery
The flight of each valiant ghost.
The Northern myth comes back to us,
And we feel, through our sorrow's night,
That those young souls are striving still
Somewhere for the truth and light.

It was not their time for rest and sleep;
Their hearts beat high and strong;
In their fresh veins the blood of youth
Was singing its hot, sweet song.
The open heaven bent over them,
Mid flowers their lithe feet trod,
Their lives lay vivid in light, and blest
By the smiles of women and God.

Again they come! Again I hear
The tread of that goodly band;
I know the flash of Ellsworth's eye
And the grasp of his hard, warm hand;
And Putnam, and Shaw, of the lion-heart,
And an eye like a Boston girl's;
And I see the light of heaven which lay
On Ulric Dahlgren's curls.

There is no power in the gloom of hell
To quench those spirits' fire;
There is no power in the bliss of heaven
To bid them not aspire;

LOVE'S PRAYER

That all thy path be light
Let darkness fall on me;
If all thy days be bright,
Mine black as night could be;
My love would light my night.

For thou art more than life,
And if our fate should set
Life and my love at strife,
How could I then forget
I love thee more than life?

CHRISTINE

The beauty of the northern dawns,
Their pure, pale light is thine;
Yet all the dreams of tropic nights
Within thy blue eyes shine.
Not statelier in their prisoning seas
The icebergs grandly move,
But in thy smile is youth and joy,
And in thy voice is love.

Thou art like Hecla's crest that stands
So lonely, proud, and high,
No earthly thing may come between
Her summit and the sky.
The sun in vain may strive to melt
Her crown of virgin snow —
But the great heart of the mountain glows
With deathless fire below.

EXPECTATION

Roll on, O shining sun,
To the far seas,
Bring down, ye shades of eve,
The soft, salt breeze!
Shine out, O stars, and light
My darling's pathway bright,
As through the summer night
She comes to me.

No beam of any star
Can match her eyes;
Her smile the bursting day
In light outvies.
Her voice — the sweetest thing
Heard by the raptured spring
When waking wild-woods ring —
She comes to me.

Ye stars, more swiftly wheel,
O'er earth's still breast;
More wildly plunge and reel
In the dim west!
The earth is lone and lorn,
Till the glad day be born,
Till with the happy morn
She comes to me.

TO FLORA

When April woke the drowsy flowers,
And vagrant odors thronged the breeze,
And bluebirds wrangled in the bowers,
And daisies flashed along the leas,
And faint arbutus strove among
Dead winter's leaf-strewn wreck to rise,
And nature's sweetly jubilant song
Went murmuring up the sunny skies,
Into this cheerful world you came,
And gained by right your vernal name.

I think the springs have changed of late,
For "Arctics" are my daily wear,
The skies are turned to cold gray slate,
And zephyrs are but draughts of air;
But you make up whate'er we lack,
When we, too rarely, come together,
More potent than the almanac,
You bring the ideal April weather;

When you are with us we defy
The blustering air, the lowering sky;
In spite of Winter's icy darts,
We've spring and sunshine in our hearts.

In fine, upon this April day,
    This deep conundrum I will bring:
Tell me the two good reasons, pray,
    I have, to say you are like spring?

You give it up? Because we love you —
    And see so very little of you.

A HAUNTED ROOM

In the dim chamber whence but yesterday
Passed my belovèd, filled with awe I stand;
And haunting Loves fluttering on every hand
Whisper her praises who is far away.
A thousand delicate fancies glance and play
On every object which her robes have fanned,
And tenderest thoughts and hopes bloom and expand
In the sweet memory of her beauty's ray.
Ah! could that glass but hold the faintest trace
Of all the loveliness once mirrored there,
The clustering glory of the shadowy hair
That framed so well the dear young angel face!
But no, it shows my own face, full of care,
And my heart is her beauty's dwelling-place.

DREAMS

I LOVE a woman tenderly,
But cannot know if she loves me.
I press her hand, her lips I kiss,
But still love's full assurance miss.
Our waking life forever seems
Cleft by a veil of doubt and dreams.

But love and night and sleep combine
In dreams to make her wholly mine.
A sure love lights her eyes' deep blue,
Her hands and lips are warm and true.
Always the fact unreal seems,
And truth I find alone in dreams.

THE LIGHT OF LOVE

Each shining light above us
Has its own peculiar grace;
But every light of heaven
Is in my darling's face.

For it is like the sunlight,
So strong and pure and warm,
That folds all good and happy things,
And guards from gloom and harm.

And it is like the moonlight,
So holy and so calm;
The rapt peace of a summer night,
When soft winds die in balm.

And it is like the starlight;
For, love her as I may,
She dwells still lofty and serene
In mystery far away.

QUAND MÊME

I STROVE, like Israel, with my youth,
And said, Till thou bestow
Upon my life Love's joy and truth,
I will not let thee go.

And sudden on my night there woke
The trouble of the dawn;
Out of the east the red light broke,
To broaden on and on.

And now let death be far or nigh,
Let fortune gloom or shine,
I cannot all untimely die,
For love, for love is mine.

My days are tuned to finer chords,
And lit by higher suns;

Through all my thoughts and all my words
A purer purpose runs.

The blank page of my heart grows rife
With wealth of tender lore;
Her image, stamped upon my life,
Gives value evermore.

She is so noble, firm, and true,
I drink truth from her eyes,
As violets gain the heaven's own blue
In gazing at the skies.

No matter if my hands attain
The golden crown or cross;
Only to love is such a gain
That losing is not loss.

And thus whatever fate betide
Of rapture or of pain,
If storm or sun the future hide,
My love is not in vain.

So only thanks are on my lips;
And through my love I see
My earliest dreams, like freighted ships,
Come sailing home to me.

WORDS

When violets were springing
And sunshine filled the day,
And happy birds were singing
The praises of the May,
A word came to me, blighting
The beauty of the scene,
And in my heart was winter,
Though all the trees were green.

Now down the blast go sailing
The dead leaves, brown and sere;
The forests are bewailing
The dying of the year;
A word comes to me, lighting
With rapture all the air,
And in my heart is summer,
Though all the trees are bare.

THE STIRRUP CUP

My short and happy day is done,
The long and dreary night comes on;
And at my door the Pale Horse stands,
To carry me to unknown lands.

His whinny shrill, his pawing hoof,
Sound dreadful as a gathering storm;
And I must leave this sheltering roof,
And joys of life so soft and warm.

Tender and warm the joys of life, —
Good friends, the faithful and the true;
My rosy children and my wife,
So sweet to kiss, so fair to view.

So sweet to kiss, so fair to view, —
The night comes down, the lights burn blue;
And at my door the Pale Horse stands,
To bear me forth to unknown lands.

A DREAM OF BRIC-À-BRAC

[C. K. *loquitur.*]

I DREAMED I was in fair Niphon.
Amid tea-fields I journeyed on,
Reclined in my jinrikishaw;
Across the rolling plains I saw
The lordly Fusi-yama rise,
His blue cone lost in bluer skies.

At last I bade my bearers stop
Before what seemed a china-shop.
I roused myself and entered in.
A fearful joy, like some sweet sin,
Pierced through my bosom as I gazed,
Entranced, transported, and amazed.
For all the house was but one room,
And in its clear and grateful gloom,
Filled with all odors strange and strong
That to the wondrous East belong,

I saw above, around, below,
A sight to make the warm heart glow,
And leave the eager soul no lack, —
An endless wealth of bric-à-brac.

I saw bronze statues, old and rare,
Fashioned by no mere mortal skill,
With robes that fluttered in the air,
Blown out by Art's eternal will;
And delicate ivory netsukes,
Richer in tone than Cheddar cheese,
Of saints and hermits, cats and dogs,
Grim warriors and ecstatic frogs.
And here and there those wondrous masks,
More living flesh than sandal-wood,
Where the full soul in pleasure basks
And dreams of love, the only good.
The walls were all with pictures hung:
Gay villas bright in rain-washed air,
Trees to whose boughs brown monkeys clung,
Outlineless dabs of fuzzy hair.

And all about the opulent shelves
Littered with porcelain beyond price:
Imari pots arrayed themselves
Beside Ming dishes; grain-of-rice
Vied with the Royal Satsuma,
Proud of its sallow ivory beam;
And Kaga's Thousand Hermits lay
Tranced in some punch-bowl's golden gleam.
Over bronze censers, black with age,
The five-clawed dragons strife engage;
A curled and insolent Dog of Foo
Sniffs at the smoke aspiring through.

In what old days, in what far lands,
What busy brains, what cunning hands,
With what quaint speech, what alien thought,
Strange fellow-men these marvels wrought!

As thus I mused, I was aware
There grew before my eager eyes
A little maid too bright and fair,
Too strangely lovely for surprise.

It seemed the beauty of the place
Had suddenly become concrete,
So full was she of Orient grace,
From her slant eyes and burnished face
Down to her little gold-bronze feet.

She was a girl of old Japan;
Her small hand held a gilded fan,
Which scattered fragrance through the room;
Her cheek was rich with pallid bloom,
Her eye was dark with languid fire,
Her red lips breathed a vague desire;
Her teeth, of pearl inviolate,
Sweetly proclaimed her maiden state.
Her garb was stiff with broidered gold
Twined with mysterious fold on fold,
That gave no hint where, hidden well,
Her dainty form might warmly dwell, —
A pearl within too large a shell.
So quaint, so short, so lissome, she,
It seemed as if it well might be

Some jocose god, with sportive whirl,
Had taken up a long lithe girl
And tied a graceful knot in her.

I tried to speak, and found, oh, bliss!
I needed no interpreter;
I knew the Japanese for kiss, —
I had no other thought but this;
And she, with smile and blush divine,
Kind to my stammering prayer did seem;
My thought was hers, and hers was mine,
In the swift logic of my dream.
My arms clung round her slender waist,
Through gold and silk the form I traced,
And glad as rain that follows drouth,
I kissed and kissed her bright red mouth.

What ailed the girl? No loving sigh
Heaved the round bosom; in her eye
Trembled no tear; from her dear throat
Bubbled a sweet and silvery note

Of girlish laughter, shrill and clear,
That all the statues seemed to hear
The bronzes tinkled laughter fine;
I heard a chuckle argentine
Ring from the silver images;
Even the ivory netsukes
Uttered in every silent pause
Dry, bony laughs from tiny jaws;
The painted monkeys on the wall
Waked up with chatter impudent;
Pottery, porcelain, bronze, and all
Broke out in ghostly merriment, —
Faint as rain pattering on dry leaves,
Or cricket's chirp on summer eves.

And suddenly upon my sight
There grew a portent: left and right,
On every side, as if the air
Had taken substance then and there,
In every sort of form and face,
A throng of tourists filled the place.

I saw a Frenchman's sneering shrug;
A German countess, in one hand
A sky-blue string which held a pug,
With the other a fiery face she fanned;
A Yankee with a soft felt hat;
A Coptic priest from Ararat;
An English girl with cheeks of rose;
A Nihilist with Socratic nose;
Paddy from Cork with baggage light
And pockets stuffed with dynamite;
A haughty Southern Readjuster
Wrapped in his pride and linen duster;
Two noisy New York stock-brokérs
And twenty British globe-trottérs.

To my disgust and vast surprise
They turned on me lack-lustre eyes,
And each with dropped and wagging jaw
Burst out into a wild guffaw:
They laughed with huge mouths opened wide;
They roared till each one held his side;

They screamed and writhed with brutal glee,
With fingers rudely stretched to me, —
Till lo! at once the laughter died,
The tourists faded into air;
None but my fair maid lingered there,
Who stood demurely by my side.
"Who were your friends?" I asked the maid,
Taking a tea-cup from its shelf.
"This audience is disclosed," she said,
"Whenever a man makes a fool of himself."

LIBERTY

What man is there so bold that he should say
"Thus, and thus only, would I have the sea"?
For whether lying calm and beautiful,
Clasping the earth in love, and throwing back
The smile of heaven from waves of amethyst;
Or whether, freshened by the busy winds,
It bears the trade and navies of the world
To ends of use or stern activity;
Or whether, lashed by tempests, it gives way
To elemental fury, howls and roars
At all its rocky barriers, in wild lust
Of ruin drinks the blood of living things,
And strews its wrecks o'er leagues of desolate shore, —
Always it is the sea, and men bow down
Before its vast and varied majesty.

So all in vain will timorous ones essay
To set the metes and bounds of Liberty.

For Freedom is its own eternal law;
It makes its own conditions, and in storm
Or calm alike fulfills the unerring Will.
Let us not then despise it when it lies
Still as a sleeping lion, while a swarm
Of gnat-like evils hover round its head;
Nor doubt it when in mad, disjointed times
It shakes the torch of terror, and its cry
Shrills o'er the quaking earth, and in the flame
Of riot and war we see its awful form
Rise by the scaffold, where the crimson axe
Rings down its grooves the knell of shuddering kings.
Forever in thine eyes, O Liberty,
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved,
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee!

THE WHITE FLAG

I SENT my love two roses, — one
As white as driven snow,
And one a blushing royal red,
A flaming Jacqueminot.

I meant to touch and test my fate;
That night I should divine,
The moment I should see my love,
If her true heart were mine.

For if she holds me dear, I said,
She'll wear my blushing rose;
If not, she'll wear my cold Lamarque,
As white as winter's snows.

My heart sank when I met her: sure
I had been overbold,
For on her breast my pale rose lay
In virgin whiteness cold.

Yet with low words she greeted me,
With smiles divinely tender;
Upon her cheek the red rose dawned, —
The white rose meant surrender.

THE LAW OF DEATH

The song of Kilvani: fairest she
In all the land of Savatthi.
She had one child, as sweet and gay
And dear to her as the light of day.
She was so young, and he so fair,
The same bright eyes and the same dark hair;
To see them by the blossomy way,
They seemed two children at their play.

There came a death-dart from the sky,
Kilvani saw her darling die.
The glimmering shade his eyes invades,
Out of his cheek the red bloom fades;
His warm heart feels the icy chill,
The round limbs shudder, and are still.
And yet Kilvani held him fast
Long after life's last pulse was past,
As if her kisses could restore
The smile gone out forevermore.

But when she saw her child was dead,
She scattered ashes on her head,
And seized the small corpse, pale and sweet,
And rushing wildly through the street,
She sobbing fell at Buddha's feet.
"Master, all-helpful, help me now!
Here at thy feet I humbly bow;
Have mercy, Buddha, help me now!"
She groveled on the marble floor,
And kissed the dead child o'er and o'er.
And suddenly upon the air
There fell the answer to her prayer:
"Bring me to-night a lotus tied
With thread from a house where none has died."

She rose, and laughed with thankful joy,
Sure that the god would save the boy.
She found a lotus by the stream;
She plucked it from its noonday dream.
And then from door to door she fared,
To ask what house by Death was spared.

Her heart grew cold to see the eyes
Of all dilate with slow surprise:
"Kilvani, thou hast lost thy head;
Nothing can help a child that's dead.
There stands not by the Ganges' side
A house where none hath ever died."
Thus, through the long and weary day,
From every door she bore away
Within her heart, and on her arm,
A heavier load, a deeper harm.
By gates of gold and ivory,
By wattled huts of poverty,
The same refrain heard poor Kilvani,
The living are few, the dead are many.

The evening came — so still and fleet —
And overtook her hurrying feet.
And, heartsick, by the sacred fane
She fell, and prayed the god again.
She sobbed and beat her bursting breast:
"Ah, thou hast mocked me, Mightiest!

Lo I have wandered far and wide;
There stands no house where none hath died."
And Buddha answered, in a tone
Soft as a flute at twilight blown,
But grand as heaven and strong as death
To him who hears with ears of faith:
"Child, thou art answered. Murmur not!
Bow, and accept the common lot."

Kilvani heard with reverence meet,
And laid her child at Buddha's feet.

MOUNT TABOR

On Tabor's height a glory came,
And, shrined in clouds of lambent flame,
The awestruck, hushed disciples saw
Christ and the prophets of the law.
Moses, whose grand and awful face
Of Sinai's thunder bore the trace,
And wise Elias, — in his eyes
The shade of Israel's prophecies, —
Stood in that wide, mysterious light,
Than Syrian noons more purely bright,
One on each hand, and high between
Shone forth the godlike Nazarene.
They bowed their heads in holy fright, —
No mortal eyes could bear the sight, —
And when they looked again, behold!
The fiery clouds had backward rolled,
And borne aloft in grandeur lonely,
Nothing was left "save Jesus only."

Resplendent type of things to be!
We read its mystery to-day
With clearer eyes than even they,
The fisher-saints of Galilee.
We see the Christ stand out between
The ancient law and faith serene,
Spirit and letter; but above
Spirit and letter both was Love.

Led by the hand of Jacob's God,
Through wastes of eld a path was trod
By which the savage world could move
Upward through law and faith to love.
And there in Tabor's harmless flame
The crowning revelation came.
The old world knelt in homage due,
The prophets near in reverence drew,
Law ceased its mission to fulfill,
And Love was lord on Tabor's hill.

So now, while creeds perplex the mind
And wranglings load the weary wind,

MOUNT TABOR

When all the air is filled with words
And texts that ring like clashing swords,
Still, as for refuge, we may turn
Where Tabor's shining glories burn, —
The soul of antique Israel gone,
And nothing left but Christ alone.

He stood before the Sanhedrim;
The scowling rabbis gazed at him.
He recked not of their praise or blame;
There was no fear, there was no shame,
For one upon whose dazzled eyes
The whole world poured its vast surprise.
The open heaven was far too near,
His first day's light too sweet and clear,
To let him waste his new-gained ken
On the hate-clouded face of men.

But still they questioned, Who art thou?
What hast thou been? What art thou now?
Thou art not he who yesterday
Sat here and begged beside the way;
For he was blind.

— *And I am he;*
For I was blind, but now I see.

He told the story o'er and o'er;
It was his full heart's only lore:
A prophet on the Sabbath-day
Had touched his sightless eyes with clay,
And made him see who had been blind.
Their words passed by him like the wind,
Which raves and howls, but cannot shock
The hundred-fathom-rooted rock.

Their threats and fury all went wide;
They could not touch his Hebrew pride.
Their sneers at Jesus and His band,
Nameless and homeless in the land,
Their boasts of Moses and his Lord,
All could not change him by one word.

I know not what this man may be,
Sinner or saint; but as for me,
One thing I know, — that I am he
Who once was blind, and now I see.

They were all doctors of renown,
The great men of a famous town,
With deep brows, wrinkled, broad, and wise,
Beneath their wide phylacteries;
The wisdom of the East was theirs,
And honor crowned their silver hairs.
The man they jeered and laughed to scorn

Was unlearned, poor, and humbly born;
But he knew better far than they
What came to him that Sabbath-day;
And what the Christ had done for him
He knew, and not the Sanhedrim.

SINAI AND CALVARY

There are two mountains hallowed
By majesty sublime,
Which rear their crests unconquered
Above the floods of Time.
Uncounted generations
Have gazed on them with awe, —
The mountain of the Gospel,
The mountain of the Law.

From Sinai's cloud of darkness
The vivid lightnings play;
They serve the God of vengeance,
The Lord who shall repay.
Each fault must bring its penance,
Each sin the avenging blade,
For God upholds in justice
The laws that He hath made.

But Calvary stands to ransom
The earth from utter loss,
In shade than light more glorious,
The shadow of the Cross.
To heal a sick world's trouble,
To soothe its woe and pain,
On Calvary's sacred summit
The Paschal Lamb was slain.

The boundless might of Heaven
Its law in mercy furled,
As once the bow of promise
O'erarched a drowning world.
The Law said, As you keep me,
It shall be done to you;
But Calvary prays, Forgive them;
They know not what they do.

Almighty God! direct us
To keep Thy perfect Law!
O blessed Saviour, help us
Nearer to Thee to draw!

Let Sinai's thunders aid us
To guard our feet from sin;
And Calvary's light inspire us
The love of God to win.

THE VISION OF SAINT PETER

To Peter by night the faithfullest came
And said, "We appeal to thee!
The life of the Church is in thy life;
We pray thee to rise and flee.

"For the tyrant's hand is red with blood,
And his arm is heavy with power;
Thy head, the head of the Church, will fall,
If thou tarry in Rome an hour."

Through the sleeping town Saint Peter passed
To the wide Campagna plain;
In the starry light of the Alban night
He drew free breath again:

When across his path an awful form
In luminous glory stood;

His thorn-crowned brow, His hands and feet,
Were wet with immortal blood.

The godlike sorrow which filled His eyes
Seemed changed to a godlike wrath,
As they turned on Peter, who cried aloud,
And sank to his knees in the path.

"Lord of my life, my love, my soul!
Say, what wilt Thou with me?"
A voice replied, "I go to Rome
To be crucified for thee."

The apostle sprang, all flushed, to his feet, —
The vision had passed away;
The light still lay on the dewy plain,
But the sky in the east was gray.

To the city walls Saint Peter turned,
And his heart in his breast grew fire;
In every vein the hot blood burned
With the strength of one high desire.

And sturdily back he marched to his death
Of terrible pain and shame;
And never a shade of fear again
To the stout apostle came.

ISRAEL

When by Jabbok the patriarch waited
To learn on the morrow his doom,
And his dubious spirit debated
In darkness and silence and gloom,
There descended a Being with whom
He wrestled in agony sore,
With striving of heart and of brawn,
And not for an instant forbore
Till the east gave a threat of the dawn;
And then, as the Awful One blessed him,
To his lips and his spirit there came,
Compelled by the doubts that oppressed him,
The cry that through questioning ages
Has been wrung from the hinds and the sages.
"Tell me, I pray Thee, Thy name!"

Most fatal, most futile, of questions!
Wherever the heart of man beats,

In the spirit's most sacred retreats,
It comes with its sombre suggestions,
Unanswered forever and aye.
The blessing may come and may stay,
For the wrestler's heroic endeavor;
But the question, unheeded forever,
Dies out in the broadening day.

In the ages before our traditions,
By the altars of dark superstitions,
The imperious question has come;
When the death-stricken victim lay sobbing
At the feet of his slayer and priest,
And his heart was laid smoking and throbbing
To the sound of the cymbal and drum
On the steps of the high Teocallis;
When the delicate Greek at his feast
Poured forth the red wine from his chalice
With mocking and cynical prayer;
When by Nile Egypt worshiping lay,
And afar, through the rosy, flushed air

The Memnon called out to the day;
Where the Muezzin's cry floats from his spire:
In the vaulted Cathedral's dim shades,
Where the crushed hearts of thousands aspire
Through art's highest miracles higher,
This question of questions invades
Each heart bowed in worship or shame;
In the air where the censers are swinging,
A voice, going up with the singing,
Cries, "Tell me, I pray Thee, Thy name!"

No answer came back, not a word,
To the patriarch there by the ford;
No answer has come through the ages
To the poets, the seers, and the sages
Who have sought in the secrets of science
The name and the nature of God,
Whether cursing in desperate defiance
Or kissing his absolute rod.
But the answer which was and shall be,
"My name! Nay, what is it to thee?"

The search and the question are vain.
By use of the strength that is in you,
By wrestling of soul and of sinew
The blessing of God you may gain.
There are lights in the far-gleaming Heaven
That never will shine on our eyes;
To mortals it may not be given
To range those inviolate skies.
The mind, whether praying or scorning,
That tempts those dread secrets shall fail;
But strive through the night till the morning,
And mightily shalt thou prevail.

THE CROWS AT WASHINGTON

Slow flapping to the setting sun
By twos and threes, in wavering rows.
As twilight shadows dimly close,
The crows fly over Washington.

Under the crimson sunset sky
Virginian woodlands leafless lie,
In wintry torpor bleak and dun.
Through the rich vault of heaven, which shines
Like a warmed opal in the sun,
With wide advance in broken lines
The crows fly over Washington.

Over the Capitol's white dome,
Across the obelisk soaring bare
To prick the clouds, they travel home,
Content and weary, winnowing
With dusky vans the golden air,
Which hints the coming of the spring,
Though winter whitens Washington.

The dim, deep air, the level ray
Of dying sunlight on their plumes,
  Give them a beauty not their own;
Their hoarse notes fail and faint away;
  A rustling murmur floating down
Blends sweetly with the thickening glooms;
They touch with grace the fading day,
  Slow flying over Washington.

I stand and watch with clouded eyes
  These dim battalions move along;
Out of the distance memory cries
  Of days when life and hope were strong,
When love was prompt and wit was gay;
Even then, at evening, as to-day,
  I watched, while twilight hovered dim
  Over Potomac's curving rim,
This selfsame flight of homing crows
Blotting the sunset's fading rose,
  Above the roofs of Washington.

REMORSE

Sad is the thought of sunniest days
Of love and rapture perished,
And shine through memory's tearful haze
The eyes once fondliest cherished.
Reproachful is the ghost of toys
That charmed while life was wasted.
But saddest is the thought of joys
That never yet were tasted.

Sad is the vague and tender dream
Of dead love's lingering kisses,
To crushed hearts haloed by the gleam
Of unreturning blisses;
Deep mourns the soul in anguished pride
For the pitiless death that won them, —
But the saddest wail is for lips that died
With the virgin dew upon them.

ESSE QUAM VIDERI

The knightly legend of thy shield betrays
The moral of thy life; a forecast wise,
And that large honor that deceit defies,
Inspired thy fathers in the elder days,
Who decked thy scutcheon with that sturdy phrase,
To be rather than seem. As eve's red skies
Surpass the morning's rosy prophecies,
Thy life to that proud boast its answer pays.
Scorning thy faith and purpose to defend
The ever-mutable multitude at last
Will hail the power they did not comprehend, —
Thy fame will broaden through the centuries;
As, storm and billowy tumult overpast,
The moon rules calmly o'er the conquered seas.

WHEN THE BOYS COME HOME

THERE's a happy time coming,
When the boys come home.
There's a glorious day coming,
When the boys come home.
We will end the dreadful story
Of this treason dark and gory
In a sunburst of glory,
When the boys come home.

The day will seem brighter
When the boys come home,
For our hearts will be lighter
When the boys come home.
Wives and sweethearts will press them
In their arms and caress them,
And pray God to bless them,
When the boys come home.

The thinned ranks will be proudest
When the boys come home,
And their cheer will ring the loudest
When the boys come home.
The full ranks will be shattered,
And the bright arms will be battered,
And the battle-standards tattered,
When the boys come home.

Their bayonets may be rusty,
When the boys come home,
And their uniforms dusty,
When the boys come home.
But all shall see the traces
Of battle's royal graces,
In the brown and bearded faces,
When the boys come home.

Our love shall go to meet them,
When the boys come home,
To bless them and to greet them,
When the boys come home;

And the fame of their endeavor
Time and change shall not dissever
From the nation's heart forever,
When the boys come home.

LÈSE-AMOUR

How well my heart remembers
Beside these camp-fire embers
The eyes that smiled so far away, —
The joy that was November's.

Her voice to laughter moving,
So merrily reproving, —
We wandered through the autumn woods
And neither thought of loving.

The hills with light were glowing,
The waves in joy were flowing, —
It was not to the clouded sun
The day's delight was owing.

Though through the brown leaves straying,
Our lives seemed gone a-Maying;
We knew not Love was with us there,
No look nor tone betraying.

LÈSE-AMOUR

How unbelief still misses
The best of being's blisses!
Our parting saw the first and last
Of love's imagined kisses.

Now 'mid these scenes the drearest
I dream of her, the dearest, —
Whose eyes outshine the Southern stars,
So far, and yet the nearest.

And Love, so gayly taunted,
Who died, no welcome granted,
Comes to me now, a pallid ghost,
By whom my life is haunted.

With bonds I may not sever,
He binds my heart forever,
And leads me where we murdered him,—
The Hill beside the River.

Camp Shaw, Florida, February, 1864.

NORTHWARD

Under the high unclouded sun
That makes the ship and shadow one,
I sail away as from the fort
Booms sullenly the noonday gun.

The odorous airs blow thin and fine,
The sparkling waves like emeralds shine,
The lustre of the coral reefs
Gleams whitely through the tepid brine.

And glitters o'er the liquid miles
The jewelled ring of verdant isles,
Where generous Nature holds her court
Of ripened bloom and sunny smiles.

Encinctured by the faithful seas
Inviolate gardens load the breeze,
Where flaunt like giant-warders' plumes
The pennants of the cocoa-trees.

Enthroned in light and bathed in balm,
In lonely majesty the Palm
  Blesses the isles with waving hands, —
High-Priest of the eternal Calm.

Yet Northward with an equal mind
I steer my course, and leave behind
  The rapture of the Southern skies, —
The wooing of the Southern wind.

For here o'er Nature's wanton bloom
Falls far and near the shade of gloom,
  Cast from the hovering vulture-wings
Of one dark thought of woe and doom.

I know that in the snow-white pines
The brave Norse fire of freedom shines,
  And fain for this I leave the land
Where endless summer pranks the vines.

O strong, free North, so wise and brave!
O South, too lovely for a slave!

Why read ye not the changeless truth, —
The free can conquer but to save?

May God upon these shining sands
Send Love and Victory clasping hands,
And Freedom's banners wave in peace
Forever o'er the rescued lands!

And here, in that triumphant hour,
Shall yielding Beauty wed with Power;
And blushing earth and smiling sea
In dalliance deck the bridal bower.

Key West, 1864.

IN THE FIRELIGHT

My dear wife sits beside the fire
With folded hands and dreaming eyes,
Watching the restless flames aspire,
And wrapped in thralling memories.
I mark the fitful firelight fling
Its warm caresses on her brow,
And kiss her hands' unmelting snow,
And glisten on her wedding-ring.

The proud free head that crowns so well
The neck superb, whose outlines glide
Into the bosom's perfect swell
Soft-billowed by its peaceful tide,
The cheek's faint flush, the lip's red glow,
The gracious charm her beauty wears,
Fill my fond eyes with tender tears
As in the days of long ago.

Days long ago, when in her eyes
The only heaven I cared for lay,
When from our thoughtless Paradise
All care and toil dwelt far away;
When Hope in wayward fancies throve,
And rioted in secret sweets,
Beguiled by Passion's dear deceits, —
The mysteries of maiden love.

One year had passed since first my sight
Was gladdened by her girlish charms,
When on a rapturous summer night
I clasped her in possessing arms.
And now ten years have rolled away,
And left such blessings as their dower,
I owe her tenfold at this hour
The love that lit our wedding-day.

For now, vague-hovering o'er her form,
My fancy sees, by love refined,
A warmer and a dearer charm
By wedlock's mystic hands intwined, —

IN THE FIRELIGHT

A golden coil of wifely cares
That years have forged, the loving joy
That guards the curly-headed boy
Asleep an hour ago up stairs.

A fair young mother, pure as fair,
A matron heart and virgin soul!
The flickering light that crowns her hair
Seems like a saintly aureole.
A tender sense upon me falls
That joy unmerited is mine,
And in this pleasant twilight shine
My perfect bliss myself appalls.

Come back! my darling, strayed so far
Into the realm of fantasy, —
Let thy dear face shine like a star
In love-light beaming over me.
My melting soul is jealous, sweet,
Of thy long silence' drear eclipse,
Oh, kiss me back with living lips
To life, love, lying at thy feet!

IN A GRAVEYARD

In the dewy depths of the graveyard
I lie in the tangled grass,
And watch, in the sea of azure,
The white cloud-islands pass.

The birds in the rustling branches
Sing gayly overhead;
Gray stones like sentinel spectres
Are guarding the silent dead.

The early flowers sleep shaded
In the cool green noonday glooms;
The broken light falls shuddering
On the cold white face of the tombs.

Without, the world is smiling
In the infinite love of God,
But the sunlight fails and falters
When it falls on the churchyard sod.

IN A GRAVEYARD

On me the joyous rapture
  Of a heart's first love is shed,
But it falls on my heart as coldly
  As sunlight on the dead.

THE PRAIRIE

The skies are blue above my head,
The prairie green below,
And flickering o'er the tufted grass
The shifting shadows go,
Vague-sailing, where the feathery clouds
Fleck white the tranquil skies,
Black javelins darting where aloft
The whirring pheasant flies.

A glimmering plain in drowsy trance
The dim horizon bounds,
Where all the air is resonant
With sleepy summer sounds, —
The life that sings among the flowers,
The lisping of the breeze,
The hot cicala's sultry cry,
The murmurous dream of bees.

The butterfly — a flying flower —
Wheels swift in flashing rings,
And flutters round his quiet kin,
With brave flame-mottled wings.
The wild Pinks burst in crimson fire,
The Phlox' bright clusters shine,
And Prairie-Cups are swinging free
To spill their airy wine.

And lavishly beneath the sun,
In liberal splendor rolled,
The Fennel fills the dipping plain
With floods of flowery gold;
And widely weaves the Iron-Weed
A woof of purple dyes
Where Autumn's royal feet may tread
When bankrupt Summer flies.

In verdurous tumult far away
The prairie-billows gleam,
Upon their crests in blessing rests
The noontide's gracious beam.

Low quivering vapors steaming dim
The level splendors break
Where languid Lilies deck the rim
Of some land-circled lake.

Far in the East like low-hung clouds
The waving woodlands lie;
Far in the West the glowing plain
Melts warmly in the sky.
No accent wounds the reverent air,
No footprint dints the sod, —
Lone in the light the prairie lies,
Rapt in a dream of God.

Illinois, 1858.

CENTENNIAL

A HUNDRED times the bells of Brown
Have rung to sleep the idle summers,
And still to-day clangs clamoring down
A greeting to the welcome comers.

And far, like waves of morning, pours
Her call, in airy ripples breaking,
And wanders to the farthest shores,
Her children's drowsy hearts awaking.

The wild vibration floats along,
O'er heart-strings tense its magic plying,
And wakes in every breast its song
Of love and gratitude undying.

My heart to meet the summons leaps
At limit of its straining tether,
Where the fresh western sunlight steeps
In golden flame the prairie heather.

And others, happier, rise and fare
To pass within the hallowed portal,
And see the glory shining there
Shrined in her steadfast eyes immortal.

What though their eyes be dim and dull,
Their heads be white in reverend blossom;
Our mother's smile is beautiful
As when she bore them on her bosom!

Her heavenly forehead bears no line
Of Time's iconoclastic fingers,
But o'er her form the grace divine
Of deathless youth and wisdom lingers.

We fade and pass, grow faint and old,
Till youth and joy and hope are banished,
And still her beauty seems to fold
The sum of all the glory vanished.

As while Tithonus faltered on
The threshold of the Olympian dawnings,

Aurora's front eternal shone
With lustre of the myriad mornings.

So joys that slip like dead leaves down,
And hopes burnt out that die in ashes,
Rise restless from their graves to crown
Our mother's brow with fadeless flashes.

And lives wrapped in tradition's mist
These honored halls to-day are haunting,
And lips by lips long withered kissed
The sagas of the past are chanting.

Scornful of absence' envious bar
Brown smiles upon the mystic meeting
Of those her sons, who, sundered far,
In brotherhood of heart are greeting;

Her wayward children wandering on
Where setting stars are lowly burning,
But still in worship toward the dawn
That gilds their souls' dear Mecca turning;

Or those who, armed for God's own fight,
Stand by his word through fire and slaughter,
Or bear our banner's starry light
Far-flashing through the Gulf's blue water.

For where one strikes for light and truth
The right to aid, the wrong redressing,
The mother of his spirit's youth
Sheds o'er his soul her silent blessing.

She gained her crown a gem of flame
When KNEASS fell dead in victory gory;
New splendor blazed upon her name
When IVES' young life went out in glory!

Thus bright forever may she keep
Her fires of tolerant Freedom burning,
Till War's red eyes are charmed to sleep
And bells ring home the boys returning.

And may she shed her radiant truth
In largess on ingenuous comers,
And hold the bloom of gracious youth
Through many a hundred tranquil summers!

A WINTER NIGHT

The winter wind is raving fierce and shrill
And chides with angry moan the frosty skies,
The white stars gaze with sleepless Gorgon eyes
That freeze the earth in terror fixed and still.
We reck not of the wild night's gloom and chill,
Housed from its rage, dear friend; and fancy flies,
Lured by the hand of beckoning memories,
Back to those summer evenings on the hill
Where we together watched the sun go down
Beyond the gold-washed uplands, while his fires
Touched into glittering life the vanes and spires
Piercing the purpling mists that veiled the town.
The wintry night thy voice and eyes beguile,
Till wake the sleeping summers in thy smile.

STUDENT-SONG

When Youth's warm heart beats high, my friend,
And Youth's blue sky is bright,
And shines in Youth's clear eye, my friend,
Love's early dawning light,
Let the free soul spurn care's control,
And while the glad days shine,
We'll use their beams for Youth's gay dreams
Of Love and Song and Wine.

Let not the bigot's frown, my friend,
O'ercast thy brow with gloom,
For Autumn's sober brown, my friend,
Shall follow Summer's bloom.
Let smiles and sighs and loving eyes
In changeful beauty shine,
And shed their beams on Youth's gay dreams
Of Love and Song and Wine.

For in the weary years, my friend,
That stretched before us lie,
There'll be enough of tears, my friend,
To dim the brightest eye.
So let them wait, and laugh at fate,
While Youth's sweet moments shine, —
Till memory gleams with golden dreams
Of Love and Song and Wine.

HOW IT HAPPENED

I PRAY you, pardon me, Elsie,
And smile that frown away
That dims the light of your lovely face
As a thunder-cloud the day.
I really could not help it, —
Before I thought, 't was done, —
And those great gray eyes flashed bright and cold,
Like an icicle in the sun.

I was thinking of the summers
When we were boys and girls,
And wandered in the blossoming woods,
And the gay winds romped with your curls.
And you seemed to me the same little girl
I kissed in the alder-path,
I kissed the little girl's lips, and alas!
I have roused a woman's wrath.

There is not so much to pardon, —
For why were your lips so red?
The blond hair fell in a shower of gold
From the proud, provoking head.
And the beauty that flashed from the splendid eyes,
And played round the tender mouth,
Rushed over my soul like a warm sweet wind
That blows from the fragrant south.

And where, after all, is the harm done?
I believe we were made to be gay,
And all of youth not given to love
Is vainly squandered away.
And strewn through life's low labors,
Like gold in the desert sands,
Are love's swift kisses and sighs and vows
And the clasp of clinging hands.

And when you are old and lonely,
In Memory's magic shine
You will see on your thin and wasting hands,
Like gems, these kisses of mine.

And when you muse at evening
  At the sound of some vanished name,
The ghost of my kisses shall touch your lips
  And kindle your heart to flame.

GOD'S VENGEANCE

Saith the Lord, "Vengeance is mine;
I will repay," saith the Lord;
Ours be the anger divine,
Lit by the flash of his word.

How shall his vengeance be done?
How, when his purpose is clear?
Must he come down from his throne?
Hath he no instruments here?

Sleep not in imbecile trust
Waiting for God to begin,
While, growing strong in the dust,
Rests the bruised serpent of sin.

Right and Wrong, — both cannot live
Death-grappled. Which shall we see?
Strike! only Justice can give
Safety to all that shall be.

Shame! to stand paltering thus,
Tricked by the balancing odds;
Strike! God is waiting for us!
Strike! for the vengeance is God's.

TOO LATE

Had we but met in other days,
Had we but loved in other ways,
Another light and hope had shone
On your life and my own.

In sweet but hopeless reveries
I fancy how your wistful eyes
Had saved me, had I known their power
In fate's imperious hour;

How loving you, beloved of God,
And following you, the path I trod
Had led me, through your love and prayers,
To God's love unawares:

And how our beings joined as one
Had passed through checkered shade and sun,
Until the earth our lives had given,
With little change, to heaven.

God knows why this was not to be.
You bloomed from childhood far from me,
The sunshine of the favored place
That knew your youth and grace.

And when your eyes, so fair and free,
In fearless beauty beamed on me,
I knew the fatal die was thrown,
My choice in life was gone.

And still with wild and tender art
Your child-love touched my torpid heart,
Gilding the blackness where it fell,
Like sunlight over hell.

In vain, in vain! my choice was gone!
Better to struggle on alone
Than blot your pure life's blameless shine
With cloudy stains of mine.

A vague regret, a troubled prayer,
And then the future vast and fair

Will tempt your young and eager eyes
With all its glad surprise.

And I shall watch you, safe and far,
As some late traveller eyes a star
Wheeling beyond his desert sands
To gladden happier lands.

LOVE'S DOUBT

'T is love that blinds my heart and eyes, —
I sometimes say in doubting dreams, —
The face that near me perfect seems
Cold Memory paints in fainter dyes.

'T was but love's dazzled eyes — I say —
That made her seem so strangely bright;
The face I worshipped yesternight,
I dread to meet it changed to-day.

As, when dies out some song's refrain,
And leaves your eyes in happy tears,
Awake the same fond idle fears, —
It cannot sound so sweet again.

You wait and say with vague annoy,
"It will not sound so sweet again,"
Until comes back the wild refrain
That floods your soul with treble joy.

So when I see my love again
  Fades the unquiet doubt away,
  While shines her beauty like the day
Over my happy heart and brain.

And in that face I see no more
  The fancied faults I idly dreamed,
  But all the charms that fairest seemed,
I find them, fairer than before.

LAGRIMAS

God send me tears!
Loose the fierce band that binds my tired brain,
Give me the melting heart of other years,
And let me weep again!

Before me pass
The shapes of things inexorably true.
Gone is the sparkle of transforming dew
From every blade of grass.

In life's high noon
Aimless I stand, my promised task undone,
And raise my hot eyes to the angry sun
That will go down too soon.

Turned into gall
Are the sweet joys of childhood's sunny reign;
And memory is a torture, love a chain
That binds my life in thrall.

And childhood's pain
Could to me now the purest rapture yield;
I pray for tears as in his parching field
The husbandman for rain.

We pray in vain!
The sullen sky flings down its blaze of brass;
The joys of love all scorched and withering pass;
I shall not weep again.

ON THE BLUFF

O GRANDLY flowing River!
O silver-gliding River!
Thy springing willows shiver
In the sunset as of old;
They shiver in the silence
Of the willow-whitened islands,
While the sun-bars and the sand-bars
Fill air and wave with gold.

O gay, oblivious River!
O sunset-kindled River!
Do you remember ever
The eyes and skies so blue
On a summer day that shone here,
When we were all alone here,
And the blue eyes were too wise
To speak the love they knew?

O stern impassive River!
O still unanswering River!
The shivering willows quiver
  As the night-winds moan and rave.
From the past a voice is calling,
From heaven a star is falling,
And dew swells in the bluebells
  Above her hillside grave.

UNA

In the whole wide world there was but one,
Others for others, but she was mine,
The one fair woman beneath the sun.

From her gold-flax curls' most marvellous shine
Down to the lithe and delicate feet
There was not a curve nor a waving line

But moved in a harmony firm and sweet
With all of passion my life could know.
By knowledge perfect and faith complete

I was bound to her, — as the planets go
Adoring around their central star,
Free, but united for weal or woe.

She was so near and Heaven so far —
She grew my heaven and law and fate
Rounding my life with a mystic bar

No thought beyond could violate.
Our love to fulness in silence nursed
Grew calm as morning, when through the gate

Of the glimmering East the sun has burst,
With his hot life filling the waiting air.
She kissed me once, — that last and first

Of her maiden kisses was placid as prayer.
Against all comers I sat with lance
In rest, and, drunk with my joy, I sware

Defiance and scorn to the world's worst chance.
In vain! for soon unhorsed I lay
At the feet of the strong god Circumstance —

And never again shall break the day,
And never again shall fall the night
That shall light me, or shield me, on my way

To the presence of my sad soul's delight.
Her dead love comes like a passionate ghost
To mourn the Body it held so light,

And Fate, like a hound with a purpose lost,
Goes round bewildered with shame and fright.

THROUGH THE LONG DAYS

Through the long days and years
What will my loved one be,
Parted from me? —
Through the long days and years.

Always as then she was
Loveliest, brightest, best,
Blessing and blest, —
Always as then she was.

Never on earth again
Shall I before her stand,
Touch lip or hand, —
Never on earth again.

But while my darling lives
Peaceful I journey on,
Not quite alone,
Not while my darling lives.

A PHYLACTERY

Wise men I hold those rakes of old
Who, as we read in antique story,
When lyres were struck and wine was poured,
Set the white Death's Head on the board —
Memento mori.

Love well! love truly! and love fast!
True love evades the dilatory.
Life's bloom flares like a meteor past;
A joy so dazzling cannot last —
Memento mori.

Stop not to pluck the leaves of bay
That greenly deck the path of glory,
The wreath will wither if you stay,
So pass along your earnest way —
Memento mori.

Hear but not heed, though wild and shrill,
The cries of faction transitory;
Cleave to *your* good, eschew *your* ill,
A Hundred Years and all is still —
Memento mori.

When Old Age comes with muffled drums,
That beat to sleep our tired life's story,
On thoughts of dying, (Rest is good!)
Like old snakes coiled i' the sun, we brood —
Memento mori.

BLONDINE

I WANDERED through a careless world
Deceived when not deceiving,
And never gave an idle heart
The rapture of believing.
The smiles, the sighs, the glancing eyes,
Of many hundred comers
Swept by me, light as rose-leaves blown
From long-forgotten summers.

But never eyes so deep and bright
And loyal in their seeming,
And never smiles so full of light
Have shone upon my dreaming.
The looks and lips so gay and wise,
The thousand charms that wreathe them, —
Almost I dare believe that truth
Is safely shrined beneath them.

Ah! do they shine, those eyes of thine,
But for our own misleading?
The fresh young smile, so pure and fine,
Does it but mock our reading?
Then faith is fled, and trust is dead,
And unbelief grows duty,
If fraud can wield the triple arm
Of youth and wit and beauty.

DISTICHS

I

Wisely a woman prefers to a lover a man who neglects her.
This one may love her some day, some day the lover will not.

II

There are three species of creatures who when they seem coming are going,
When they seem going they come: Diplomates, women, and crabs.

III

Pleasures too hastily tasted grow sweeter in fond recollection,
As the pomegranate plucked green ripens far over the sea.

IV

As the meek beasts in the Garden came flocking for Adam to name them,
Men for a title to-day crawl to the feet of a king.

V

What is a first love worth, except to prepare for a second?
What does the second love bring? Only regret for the first.

VI

Health was wooed by the Romans in groves of the laurel and myrtle.
Happy and long are the lives brightened by glory and love.

VII

Wine is like rain: when it falls on the mire it but makes it the fouler,
But when it strikes the good soil wakes it to beauty and bloom.

VIII

Break not the rose; its fragrance and beauty are surely
sufficient:
Resting contented with these, never a thorn shall you
feel.

IX

When you break up housekeeping, you learn the extent
of your treasures;
Till he begins to reform, no one can number his sins.

X

Maidens! why should you worry in choosing whom you
shall marry?
Choose whom you may, you will find you have got
somebody else.

XI

Unto each man comes a day when his favorite sins all
forsake him,
And he complacently thinks he has forsaken his sins.

XII

Be not too anxious to gain your next-door neighbor's approval:
Live your own life, and let him strive your approval to gain.

XIII

Who would succeed in the world should be wise in the use of his pronouns.
Utter the You twenty times, where you once utter the I.

XIV

The best loved man or maid in the town would perish with anguish
Could they hear all that their friends say in the course of a day.

XV

True luck consists not in holding the best of the cards at the table:
Luckiest he who knows just when to rise and go home.

XVI

Pleasant enough it is to hear the world speak of your virtues;
But in your secret heart 't is of your faults you are proud.

XVII

Try not to beat back the current, yet be not drowned in its waters;
Speak with the speech of the world, think with the thoughts of the few.

XVIII

Make all good men your well-wishers, and then, in the years' steady sifting,
Some of them turn into friends. Friends are the sunshine of life.

REGARDANT

As I lay at your feet that afternoon,
Little we spoke, — you sat and mused,
Humming a sweet old-fashioned tune,

And I worshipped you, with a sense confused
Of the good time gone and the bad on the way,
While my hungry eyes your face perused

To catch and brand on my soul for aye
The subtle smile which had grown my doom.
Drinking sweet poison hushed I lay

Till the sunset shimmered athwart the room.
I rose to go. You stood so fair
And dim in the dead day's tender gloom:

All at once, or ever I was aware,
Flashed from you on me a warm strong wave
Of passion and power; in the silence there

REGARDANT

I fell on my knees, like a lover, or slave,
With my wild hands clasping your slender waist:
And my lips, with a sudden frenzy brave,

A madman's kiss on your girdle pressed,
And I felt your calm heart's quickening beat,
And your soft hands on me one instant rest.

And if God had loved me, how endlessly sweet
Had he let my heart in its rapture burst,
And throb its last at your firm small feet!

And when I was forth, I shuddered at first
At my imminent bliss. As a soul in pain,
Treading his desolate path accursed,

Looks back and dreams through his tears' dim rain
That by Heaven's wide gate the angels smile,
Relenting, and beckon him back again,

And goes on, thrice damned by that devil's wile, —
So sometimes burns in my weary brain
The thought that you loved me all the while.

GUY OF THE TEMPLE

Down the dim West slow fails the stricken sun,
And from his hot face fades the crimson flush
Veiled in death's herald-shadows sick and gray.
Silent and dark the sombre valley lies
Forgotten; happy in the late fond beams
Glimmer the constant waves of Galilee.
Afar, below, in airy music ring
The bugles of my host; the column halts,
A wearied serpent glittering in the vale,
Where rising mist-like gleam the tented camps.

Pitch my pavilion here, where its high cross
May catch the last light lingering on the hill.
The savage shadows, struggling by the shore,
Have conquered in the valley; inch by inch
The vanquished light fights bravely to these crags
To perish glorious in the sunset fire;
Even as our hunted Cause, so pressed and torn

In Syrian valleys, and the trampled marge
Of consecrated streams, displays at last
Its narrowing glories from these steadfast walls.
Here in God's name we stand, and brighter far
Shines the stern virtue of my martyr-host
Through these invidious fortunes, than of old,
When the still sunshine glinted on their helms,
And dallying breezes woke their bridle-bells
To tinkling music by the reedy shore
Of calm Tiberias, where our angry Lord,
Wroth at the deadly sin that cursed our camp,
Denied and blinded us, and gave us up
To the avenging sword of Saladin.
Yet would he not permit his truth to sink
To utter loss amid that foundering fight,
But led us, scarred and shattered from the spoil
Of Paynim rage, the desert's thirsty death,
To where beneath the sheltering crags we prayed
And rested and grew strong. Heroes and saints
To alien peoples shall they be, my brave
And patient warriors; for in their stout hearts

God's spirit dwells forever, and their hands
Are swift to do his service on his foes.
The swelling music of their vesper-hymn
Is rising fragrant from the shadowed vale
Familiar to the welcoming gates of heaven.

Mother of God! as evening falls
Upon the silent sea,
And shadows veil the mountain walls,
We lift our souls to thee!
From lurking perils of the night,
The desert's hidden harms,
From plagues that waste, from blasts that smite,
Defend thy men-at-arms!

Ay! Heaven keep them! and ye angel-hosts
That wait with fluttering plumes around the great
White throne of God, guard them from scathe and harm!
For in your starry records never shone
The memory of desert so great as theirs.
I hold not first, though peerless else on earth,

That knightly valor, born of gentle blood
And war's long tutelage, which hath made their name
Blaze like a baleful planet o'er these lands;
Firm seat in saddle, lance unmoved, a hand
Wedding the hilt with death's persistent grasp;
One-minded rush in fight that naught can stay.
Not these the highest, though I scorn not these,
But rather offer Heaven with humble heart
The deeds that heaven hath given us arms to do.
For when God's smile was with us we were strong
To go like sudden lightning to our mark:
As on that summer day when Saladin —
Passing in scorn our host at Antioch,
Who spent the days in revel, and shamed the stars
With nightly scandal — came with all his host,
Its gay battalia brave with saffron silks,
Flaunting the banners of the Caliphate
Beneath the walls of fair Jerusalem:
And white and shaking came the Leper-King,
Great Baldwin's blasted scion, and Tripoli
And I, and twenty score of Temple Knights,

To meet the myriads marshalled by the bright
Untarnished flower of Eastern chivalry;
A moment paused with level-fronting spears
And moveless helms before that shining host,
Whose gay attire abashed the morning light,
And then struck spur and charged, while from the mass
Of rushing terror burst the awful cry,
God and the Temple! As the avalanche slides
Down Alpine slopes, precipitous, cold and dark,
Unpitying and unwrathful, grinds and crushes
The mountain violets and the valley weeds,
And drags behind a trail of chaos and death;
So burst we on that field, and through and through
The gay battalia brave with saffron silks,
Crushed and abolished every grace and gleam,
And dragged where'er we rode a sinuous track
Of chaos and death, till all the plain was filled
With battered armor, turbaned trunkless heads,
With silken mantles blushing angry gules
And Bagdad's banners trampled and forlorn.
And Saladin, stunned and bewildered sore, —

The greatest prince, save in the grace of God,
That now wears sword, — mounted his brother's barb
And, followed by a half-score followers,
Sped to his castle Shaubec, over against
The cliffs by Ascalon, and there abode:
And sullenly made order that no more
The royal nouba should be played for him
Until he should erase the rusting stain
Upon his knightly honor; and no more
The nouba sounded by the Sultan's tent,
Morning nor evening by the silent tent,
Until the headlong greed of Chatillon
Spread ruin on our cause from Montreale.
But greatest are my warriors, as I deem,
In that their hearts, nearer than any else
Keep true the pledge of perfect purity
They pledged upon their sword-hilts long ago.
For all is possible to the pure in heart.

Mother of God! thy starry smile
Still bless us from above!

Keep pure our souls from passion's guile,
Our hearts from earthly love!
Still save each soul from guilt apart
As stainless as each sword,
And guard undimmed in every heart
The image of our Lord!

O goodliest fellowship that the world has known,
True hearts and stalwart arms! above your breasts
Glitters no flash of wreathen amulet
Forged against sword-stroke by the chanted rhythm
Of charms accurst; but in each steadfast heart
Blazes the light of cloudless purity,
That like a splendid jewel glorifies
With restless fire the gold that spheres it round,
And marks you children of our God, whose lives
He guards with the awful jealousy of love.
And even me that generous love has spared, —
Me, trustless knight and miserable man, —
Sad prey of dark and mutinous thoughts that tempt
My sick soul into perjury and death —

Since his great love had pity of my pain,
Has spared to lead these blameless warriors safe
Into the desert from the blazing towns,
Out of the desert to the inviolate hills
Where God has roofed them with his hollow shield.
Through all these days of tempest and eclipse
His hand has led me and his wrath has flashed
Its lightnings in the pathway of my sword.
And so I hope, and so my crescent faith
Gains daily power, that all my prayers and tears
And toils and blood and anguish borne for him
May blot the accusing of my deadly sin
From heaven's high compt, and give me rest in death;
And lay the pallid ghost of mortal love,
That fills with banned and mournful loveliness,
Unblest, the haunted chambers of my soul.
My misery will atone, — my misery, —
Dear God, will surely atone! for not the sting
Of macerating thongs, nor the slow horror
Of crowns of thorny iron maddening the brows,
Nor all that else pale hermits have devised

To scourge the rebel senses in their shade
Of caverned desolation, have the power
To smart and goad and lash and mortify
Like the great love that binds my ruined heart
Relentless, as the insidious ivy binds
The shattered bulk of some deserted tower,
Enlacing slow and riving with strong hands
Of pitiless verdure every seam and jut,
Till none may tear it forth and save the tower,
So binds and masters me my hopeless love.
So through the desert, in the silent hills,
I' the current of the battle's storm and stress,
One thought has driven me, — that though men may call
Me stainless Paladin, Knight leal and true
To Christ and Our Lady, still I know myself
A knight not after God's own heart, a soul
Recreant, and whelmed in the forbidden sin.
For dearer to my sad heart than the cross
I give my heart's best blood for are the eyes
That long ago, when youth and hope were mine,
I loved in thy still valleys, far Provence!

And sweeter to my spirit than the bells
Of rescued Salem are the loving tones
Of her dear voice, soft echoing o'er the years.
They haunt me in the stillness and the glare
Of desert noontide when the horizon's line
Swims faintly throbbing, and my shadow hides
Skulking beneath me from the brassy sky;
And when night comes to soothe with breath of balm
And pomp of stars the worn and weary world,
Her eyes rise in my soul and make its day.
And even into the battle comes my love,
Snatching the duty that I offer Heaven.
At closing of El-Majed's awful day,
When the last quivering sunbeams, choked with dust
And fume of blood, failed on the level plain,
In the last charge, when gathered all our knights
The precious handful who from morn had stemmed
The fury of the multitudinous hosts
Of Islam, where in youth's hot fire and pride
Ramped the young lion-whelp, Ben-Saladin;
As down the slope we rode at eventide,

The dying sunlight faintly smiled to greet
Our tattered guidons and our dinted helms
And lance-heads blooming with the battle's rose.
Into the vale, dusk with the shadow of death,
With silent lips and ringing mail we rode.
And something in the spirit of the hour,
Or fate, or memory, or sorrow, or sin,
Or love, which unto me is all of these,
Possessed and bound me; for when dashed our troop
In stormy clangor on the Paynim lines
The soul of my dead youth came into me;
Faded away my oath; the woes of Zion,
God was forgot; blazed in my leaping heart,
With instant flash, life's inextinguished fires;
Plunging along each tense limb poured the blood
Hot with its years of sleeping-smothered flame.
And in a dream I charged, and in a dream
I smote resistless; foemen in my path
Fell unregarded, like the wayside flowers
Clipped by the truant's staff in daisied lanes.
For over me burned lustrous the dear eyes

Of my beloved; I strove as at a joust
To gain at end the guerdon of her smile.
And ever, as in the dense mêlée I dashed,
Her name burst from my lips, as lightning breaks
Out of the plunging wrack of summer storms.

O my lost love! Bright o'er the waste of years —
That bliss and beauty shines upon my soul;
As far beyond yon desert hangs the sun,
Gilding with tender beam the barren stretch
Of sands that intervene. In this still light
The old sweet memories glimmer back to me.
Fair summers of my youth, — the idle days
I wandered in the bosky coverts hid
In the dim woods that girt my ancient home;
The blue young eyes I met and worshipped there;
The love that growing turned those gloomy wilds
To faery dells, and filled the vernal air
With light that bathed the hills of Paradise;
The warm, long days of rapturous summer-time,
When through the forests thick and lush we strayed,

And love made our own sunshine in the shades.
And all things fair and graceful in the woods
I loved with liberal heart; the violets
Were dear for her dear eyes, the quiring birds
That caught the musical tremble of her voice.
O happy twilights in the leafy glooms!
When in the glowing dusk the winsome arts
And maiden graces that all day had kept
Us twain and separate melted away
In blushing silence, and my love was mine
Utterly, utterly, with clinging arms
And quick, caressing fingers, warm red lips,
Where vows, half uttered, drowned in kisses, died;
Mine, with the starlight in her passionate eyes;
The wild wind of the woodland breathing low
To wake the elfin music of the leaves,
And free the prisoned odors of the flowers,
In honor of young Love come to his throne!
While we under the stars, with twining arms
And mutual lips insatiate, gave our souls —
Madly forgetting earth and heaven — to love!

In desert march or battle's flame,
In fortress and in field,
Our war-cry is thy holy name,
Thy love our joy and shield!
And if we falter, let thy power
Thy stern avenger be,
And God forget us in the hour
We cease to think of thee!

Curse me not, God of Justice and of Love!
Pitiful God, let my long woe atone!

I cannot deem but God has pitied me;
Else why with painful care have I been saved,
Whenever tossed and drenched in the fierce tide
Of Saladin's victories by the walls profaned
Of Jaffa, on the sands of far Daroum,
Or in the battle thundering on the downs
Of Ramlah, or the bloody day that shed
Red horrors on high Gaza's parapets?
For never a storm of fatal fight has raged

In Islam's track of rout and ruin swept
From Egypt to Gebail, but when the ebb
Of battle came I and my host have lain,
Scarred, scorched, safe somewhere on its fiery shore.
At Marcab's lingering siege, where day by day
We told the Moslem legions toiling slow,
Planting their engines, delving in their mines
To quench in our destruction this last light
Of Christendom, our fortress in the crags,
God's beacon swung defiant from the stars;
One thunderous night I knew their miners groped
Below, and thought ere morn to die, in crush
And tumult of the falling citadel.
And pondering of my fate — the broken storm
Sobbing its life away — I was aware
There grew between me and the quieting skies
A face and form I knew, — not as in dreams,
The sad dishevelled loveliness of earth,
But lighter than the thin air where she swayed, —
Gold hair flame-fluttered, eyes and mouth aglow
With lambent light of spiritual joy.

With sweet command she beckoned me away
And led me vaguely dreaming, till I saw
Where the wild flood in sudden fury had burst
A passage through the rocks: and thence I led
My host unharmed, following her luminous eyes,
Until the East was gray, and with a smile
Wooing me heavenward still she passed away
Into the rosy trouble of the dawn.

And I believe my love is shrived in heaven,
And I believe that I shall soon be free.

For ever, as I journey on, to me
Waking or sleeping come faint whisperings
And fancies not of earth, as if the gates
Of near eternity stood for me ajar,
And ghostly gales come blowing o'er my soul
Fraught with the amaranth odors of the skies.
I go to join the Lion-Heart at Acre,
And there, after due homage to my liege,
And after patient penance of the church,

And after final devoir in the fight,
If that my God be gracious, I shall die.
And so I pray — Lord pardon if I sin! —
That I may lose in death's imbittered wave,
The stain of sinful loving, and may find
In glory again the love I lost below,
With all of fair and bright and unattained,
Beautiful in the cherishing smile of God,
By the glad waters of the River of Life!

Night hangs above the valley; dies the day
In peace, casting his last glance on my cross,
And warns me to my prayers. *Ave Maria!*

Mother of God! the evening fades
On wave and hill and lea,
And in the twilight's deepening shades
We lift our souls to thee!
In passion's stress, the battle's strife,
The desert's lurking harms,
Maid-Mother of the Lord of Life,
Protect thy men-at-arms!

TRANSLATIONS

THE WAY TO HEAVEN

FROM THE GERMAN

One day the Sultan, grand and grim,
Ordered the Mufti brought to him.
"Now let thy wisdom solve for me
The question I shall put to thee.

"The different tribes beneath my sway
Four several sects of priests obey;
Now tell me which of all the four
Is on the path to Heaven's door."

The Sultan spake, and then was dumb.
The Mufti looked about the room,
And straight made answer to his lord,
Fearing the bowstring at each word:

"Thou, godlike in thy lofty birth,
Who art our Allah upon earth,

Illume me with thy favoring ray,
And I will answer as I may.

"Here, where thou thronest in thy hall,
I see there are four doors in all;
And through all four thy slaves may gaze
Upon the brightness of thy face.

"That I came hither safely through
Was to thy gracious message due,
And, blinded by thy splendor's flame,
I cannot tell the way I came."

COUNTESS JUTTA

FROM THE GERMAN OF HEINRICH HEINE

The Countess Jutta passed over the Rhine
In a light canoe by the moon's pale shine.
The handmaid rows and the Countess speaks:
"Seest thou not there where the water breaks
Seven corpses swim
In the moonlight dim?
So sorrowful swim the dead!

"They were seven knights full of fire and youth,
They sank on my heart and swore me truth.
I trusted them; but for Truth's sweet sake,
Lest they should be tempted their oaths to break,
I had them bound,
And tenderly drowned!
So sorrowful swim the dead!"

The merry Countess laughed outright!
It rang so wild in the startled night!
Up to the waist the dead men rise
And stretch lean fingers to the skies.
They nod and stare
With a glassy glare!
So sorrowful swim the dead!

A BLESSING

AFTER HEINE

When I look on thee and feel how dear,
How pure, and how fair thou art,
Into my eyes there steals a tear,
And a shadow mingled of love and fear
Creeps slowly over my heart.

And my very hands feel as if they would lay
Themselves on thy fair young head,
And pray the good God to keep thee alway
As good and lovely, as pure and gay, —
When I and my wild love are dead.

TO THE YOUNG

AFTER HEINE

Let your feet not falter, your course not alter
By golden apples, till victory 's won!
The sword's sharp clangor, the dart's shrill anger,
Swerve not the hero thundering on.

A bold beginning is half the winning,
An Alexander makes worlds his fee.
No long debating! The Queens are waiting
In his pavilion on bended knee.

Thus swift pursuing his wars and wooing,
He mounts old Darius' bed and throne.
O glorious ruin! O blithe undoing!
O drunk death-triumph in Babylon!

THE GOLDEN CALF

AFTER HEINE

Double flutes and horns resound
As they dance the idol round;
Jacob's daughters, madly reeling,
Whirl about the golden calf.
Hear them laugh!
Kettledrums and laughter pealing.

Dresses tucked above their knees,
Maids of noblest families,
In the swift dance blindly wheeling,
Circle in their wild career
Round the steer, —
Kettledrums and laughter pealing.

Aaron's self, the guardian gray
Of the faith, at last gives way,

Madness all his senses stealing;
Prances in his high priest's coat
Like a goat, —
Kettledrums and laughter pealing.

THE AZRA

AFTER HEINE

Daily walked the fair and lovely
Sultan's daughter in the twilight, —
In the twilight by the fountain,
Where the sparkling waters plash.

Daily stood the young slave silent
In the twilight by the fountain,
Where the plashing waters sparkle,
Pale and paler every day.

Once by twilight came the princess
Up to him with rapid questions:
"I would know thy name, thy nation,
Whence thou comest, who thou art."

And the young slave said, "My name is
Mahomet, I come from Yemmen.
I am of the sons of Azra,
Men who perish if they love."

GOOD AND BAD LUCK

AFTER HEINE

Good Luck is the gayest of all gay girls,
Long in one place she will not stay,
Back from your brow she strokes the curls,
Kisses you quick and flies away.

But Madame Bad Luck soberly comes
And stays, — no fancy has she for flitting, —
Snatches of true love-songs she hums,
And sits by your bed, and brings her knitting.

L'AMOUR DU MENSONGE

AFTER CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

When I behold thee, O my indolent love,
To the sound of ringing brazen melodies,
Through garish halls harmoniously move,
Scattering a scornful light from languid eyes;

When I see, smitten by the blazing lights,
Thy pale front, beauteous in its bloodless glow
As the faint fires that deck the Northern nights,
And eyes that draw me wheresoe'er I go;

I say, She is fair, too coldly strange for speech;
A crown of memories, her calm brow above,
Shines; and her heart is like a bruised red peach,
Ripe as her body for intelligent love.

Art thou late fruit of spicy savor and scent?
A funeral vase awaiting tearful showers?

An Eastern odor, waste and oasis blent?
A silken cushion or a bank of flowers?

I know there are eyes of melancholy sheen
To which no passionate secrets e'er were given;
Shrines where no god or saint has ever been,
As deep and empty as the vault of Heaven.

But what care I if this be all pretense?
'T will serve a heart that seeks for truth no more.
All one thy folly or indifference, —
Hail, lovely mask, thy beauty I adore!

AMOR MYSTICUS

FROM THE SPANISH OF SOR MARCELA DE CARPIO

Let them say to my Lover
That here I lie!
The thing of His pleasure,
His slave am I.

Say that I seek Him
Only for love,
And welcome are tortures
My passion to prove.

Love giving gifts
Is suspicious and cold;
I have all, my Belovèd,
When Thee I hold.

Hope and devotion
The good may gain;

I am but worthy
Of passion and pain.

So noble a Lord
None serves in vain,
For the pay of my love
Is my love's sweet pain.

I love Thee, to love Thee, —
No more I desire;
By faith is nourished
My love's strong fire.

I kiss Thy hands
When I feel their blows;
In the place of caresses
Thou givest me woes.

But in Thy chastising
Is joy and peace.
O Master and Love,
Let Thy blows not cease.

Thy beauty, Belovèd,
With scorn is rife,
But I know that Thou lovest me
Better than life.

And because Thou lovest me,
Lover of mine,
Death can but make me
Utterly Thine.

I die with longing
Thy face to see;
Oh! sweet is the anguish
Of death to me!

UNCOLLECTED PIECES

BENONI DUNN

I SAT on a worm fence talking
With one of the Bear Creek boys,
When all the woods were ringing
With the blue jay's jubilant noise.
Prairie and timber were glorious
In the love of the hot young sun,
But a philosophic gloom possessed
The soul of Benoni Dunn.

"Nothin' in all this 'varsal yerth
Is like what it ort to be,
I've give up tryin' to see the nub —
It's too hefty a job fer me.
The weaker a feller's stummick may be,
The bigger his dinner, you bet,
And the more he don't care a damn for cash,
The richer he's sure to get.

"Thar's old Brads — got a pretty young wife
And the biggest house in Pike —
No chick nor child — says he's sixty-two,
But he's eighty-two more like.
I 'low God thinks it a derned good joke —
The way he tries it on —
To send a plenty of hazel-nuts
To folks with their back teeth gone.

"I ort to be in Congress;
I would ef I'd went to school.
Thar's Colonel Scrubb our member
He's jest a nateral fool.
When he come here, Lord! he did n't know
Peach blow from a dogwood blossom,
And the derned galoot owned up to me
That he never seed a 'possum!

"Everything works contráry —
You never knows what to do:
Ef I sow in wheat I'll wish it was corn
Afore the fall is through.

And talk about pleasure — ef I was axed
The thing that most I love,
I'd say it's gingerbread — and that
I git the littlest uv.

"What is the use of livin'
Where everything goes skew-haw,
Where you starve ef you keep the Commandments,
And hang ef you break the law.
I've give up tryin' to see the nub
Uv what we was meant to be;
The more I study, the more I don't know —
It's too hefty a job fer me."

And this was the sum of the thinking
Of tall Benoni Dunn, —
While gay in weeds his cornfield laughed
In the light of the kindly sun.
Ruminant thus he maundered,
With a scowl on his tangled brow,
With gaps in his fence, and hate in his heart,
And rust on his idle plough.

"AFTER YOU, PILOT"

Dawn gilded — over dunes of sand
That border Mobile Bay —
The fleet, which under Farragut
In expectation lay.
For ere that rising sun should set,
Full many a sailor bold
Should perish, leaving but a name
On history's page of gold.

Others have sung and yet shall sing
Of Farragut's renown:
How to the Hartford's maintop lashed
He gained his conqueror's crown.
Let others sing those deeds while we,
In sorrow and in pride,
Tell how one gallant gentleman
With high decorum died.

The Admiral came across the bar
With threescore flags in air,
The Gulf's blue mirror never glassed
A scene so sternly fair.
Over his fleet of eighteen ships
His dark eye proudly ran;
And Craven in the monitor
Tecumseh led the van.

Morgan and Gaines shot forth their fires
From either bellowing shore;
With deeper rage the fleet replied —
One thunderous, volleying roar.
But straight ahead bold Craven dashed
Upon the swelling tide,
To seek and smite the Tennessee,
The foeman's hope and pride.

A noble quarry! Seeking her,
Most worth his knightly steel,
He recked not of the leaking death
Beneath his gliding keel.

One moment in the conning tower
He thought of loved ones dear —
Then at the black foe's lowering bulk
He bade his pilot steer.

A roar, a shock, a shuddering plunge!
Full well did Craven know
No mortal skill might save his ship
Smit by that dastard blow.
The doom impending shrieked and beat
Its fatal wings so nigh
That only one might pass the stair
And one must pause, and die.

"After you, Pilot," Craven said.
O words of flawless fame!
Out of that awful moment bloomed
A pure, immortal name.
The pilot passed, the hero stayed;
Within that turret's round
Met glorious death and endless life
And faith by honor crowned.

AFTER YOU, PILOT

The good ship plunged to ocean's ooze.
  Forth from the flood and fire
Our reverence sees that gentle soul
  To kindred heaven aspire;
And marks — when Craven stands beneath
  God's hero-sheltering dome —
The shade of Philip Sidney rise
  And bid him welcome home.

SONNETS

TO THEODORE ROOSEVELT

Son of a sire whose heart beat ever true
To God, to country, and the fireside love
To which returning, like a homing dove,
From each high duty done, he gladly flew,
Complete, yet touched by genius through and through,
The lofty qualities that made him great,
Loved in his home and priceless to the state,
By Heaven's grace are garnered up in you.
Be yours, we pray, the dauntless heart of youth,
The eye to see the humor of the game,
The scorn of lies, the large Batavian mirth;
And, past the happy, fruitful years of fame,
Of sport and work and battle for the truth,
A home not all unlike your home on earth.

Christmas Eve, 1902.

ATAVISM

O BEAUTEOUS daughter of a mighty race!
In thy fair features and thy radiant eyes —
Like bright clouds floating over brighter skies —
The shadows of a glorious past we trace.
Framed in the oval of thy perfect face
Flit the pale belles of bygone centuries;
A hint of lawgivers and jurists lies
In that pure brow where strength is wed with grace.
And looking on thy profile's symmetry
A world-famed face across my memory comes, —
'Neath the slouched hat a watching eagle's eye,
Where down the dusty line goes riding by,
With blare of trumpets and hoarse growl of drums,
Tecumseh Sherman marching to the sea.

TWILIGHT ON SANDUSKY MARSH

Low in the west the moon's slim crescent swings.
Across the marsh the vesper breezes bear
The sounds of gloaming; from far cornfields fare
The chittering blackbirds, whose ingathering brings
The silken flutter of a myriad wings.
The wild duck's cry floats down the thickening air
As of one hunted, full of fear and care.
Sad twilight comes with dubious whisperings.
How changed from that exultant world which lay
In the wide smile of noon! The evening's shiver
Means the day's death; its thronging whispers blend
With thoughts that haunt men when their lives must end.
Another dawn may gild a fairer day,
But this day, when it dies, is gone forever.

SORRENTO

The mirthful gods who ruled o'er Greater Greece
Created this fair land in some high mood
Of frolic joy; the smiling heavens brood
Over a scene soft-whelmed in jocund peace.
Gay clamors, odorous breathings never cease
From basking crag, lime grove, and olive wood;
Swart fishers sing from out the sparkling flood
Where once the syrens sang in luring ease.
The curved beach swarms with brown-skinned boys and girls
Dancing the tarantella on the sands,
Their limbs alive with music's jollity;
And ever, where the warm wave leaps and swirls
With glad embrace clasping the bowery lands,
Breaks the tumultuous laughter of the sea.

PÆSTUM

Two thousand years these temples have been old.
Yet were they not more lovely the first day,
When o'er yon hills the young light blushed and lay
Along the tapering columns, and eve's gold
Over the Tyrrhene sea in glory rolled.
By power of truth, by beauty's royal sway,
While men, and creeds, and kingdoms pass away,
Their gift to charm and awe they calmly hold.
Beauty and truth! by that high grace divine
They force the tribute of the vassal years;
Clouds gloom, the blue wave dimples, the stars shine
To make them fairer; even Time that tears
And shames all other things, here can but bless
And beautify this crumbling loveliness.

THANATOS ATHANATOS

(DEATHLESS DEATH)

At eve when the brief wintry day is sped,
I muse beside my fire's faint-flickering glare —
Conscious of wrinkling face and whitening hair —
Of those who, dying young, inherited
The immortal youthfulness of the early dead.
I think of Raphael's grand-seigneurial air;
Of Shelley and Keats, with laurels fresh and fair
Shining unwithered on each sacred head;
And soldier boys who snatched death's starry prize,
With sweet life radiant in their fearless eyes,
The dreams of love upon their beardless lips,
Bartering dull age for immortality;
Their memories hold in death's unyielding fee
The youth that thrilled them to the finger-tips.

NIGHT IN VENICE

Love, in this summer night, do you recall
Midnight, and Venice, and those skies of June
Thick-sown with stars, when from the still lagoon
We glided noiseless through the dim canal?
A sense of some belated festival
Hung round us, and our own hearts beat in tune
With passionate memories that the young moon
Lit up on dome and tower and palace wall.
We dreamed what ghosts of vanished loves made part
Of that sweet light and trembling, amorous air.
I felt — in those rich beams that kissed your hair,
Those breezes, warm with bygone lovers' sighs —
All the dead beauty of Venice in your eyes,
All the old loves of Venice in my heart.

PEACE

AFTER STUART MERRILL

Trembling of purple banners in the fight,
Wild neigh of horses in destruction's path,
Howling of trumpets answering yells of wrath,
Dim eyes where slowly fades the living light;
And on the plains, the ghastly heaped up death
O'er which the guns thunder their dull refrain;
And summer is shamed and autumn grieves in rain,
And carnage breathes abroad a hateful breath.
Back! O thou nightmare of the tired world's rest!
The Spring sees blooming at the mother's breast
Pink mouths of babes with cooing laughter rife;
While from the valley to the mountain springs,
Amid the rustle of zephyrs and of wings,
Sound, like young heart-beats, all the bells of Life.

LOVE'S DAWN

In wandering through waste places of the world,
I met my love and knew not she was mine.
But soon a light more tender, more divine,
Filled earth and heaven; richer cloud-curtains furled
The west at eve; a softer flush impearled
The gates of dawn; a note more pure and fine
Rang in the thrush's song; a rarer shine
Varnished the leaves by May's sweet sun uncurled.
To me, who loved but knew not, all the air
Trembled to shocks of far-off melodies,
As all the summer's rustling thrills the trees
When spring suns strike their boughs, asleep and bare.
And then, one blessed day, I saw arise
Love's morning, glorious, in her tranquil eyes.

HELEN'S STAR STONE

THERE was a red star stone, old poets feign,
Hung on the neck of Helen, the most fair
Of women, the world's wonder; gathering there,
Dripped ever one bright drop of blood; like rain
That ere it falls blows into mist again.
The crimson gout melted to roseate air,
And that divine white bosom, proudly bare,
Of all the woe it cost bore never a stain.
So you, serene and beauteous lady, rove
'Mid throngs of luckless ones who gaze and die.
And not a tremor of heartbreak, not a sigh
Nor strangling sob of strong men whelmed in love
Avails your calm heart by one beat to move
Or dims the cloudless heaven of your eye.

A CHALLENGE

The luminous pages of all story prove
High love hath ending in heroic woe;
Sharp-fanged and fell, dark death doth ever go
In waiting for the wandering feet of love.
And if that fate be shunned, love's footsteps move
Down the dull slope that leads to regions low
Where the thick pulse of ease and wont beats slow
As in some dusk and poppy-haunted grove.
Shall we accept, or shall we not defy,
Entrenched in our fast love, this augury?
Never shall I less than adore thee, Sweet!
No use, my queen, shall dim thy radiant crown.
And if, in envy, death shall strike me down,
Let his dart find me here, kissing thy feet!

LOVE AND MUSIC

I GAZED upon my love while music smote
The soft night air into glad harmony;
Lapt on the ripples of a silver sea,
I heard the bright tones rapturous dance and float.
Hearing and sight were wed; each flattering note
Meant some perfection of my love to me.
Caressed by music, it was bliss to see
Her form, white-robed, the jewel at her throat,
Her glimmering hands, her dusky, perfumed hair,
Her low, clear brow, her deep, proud, dreaming eyes,
Bent kindly upon me, her worshiper;
The dulcet, delicate sounds that shook the air —
As if love's joy rained from the starlit skies —
Seemed all sweet, inarticulate thoughts of her.

OBEDIENCE

The lady of my love bids me not love her.
I can but bow obedient to her will;
And so, henceforth, I love her not; but still
I love the lustrous hair that glitters over
Her proud young head; I love the smiles that hover
About her mouth; the lights and shades that fill
Her star-bright eyes; the low, rich tones that thrill
Like thrush-songs gurgling from a vernal cover.
I love the fluttering dimples in her cheek;
Her cheek I love, its soft and tender bloom;
I love her sweet lips and the words they speak,
Words wise or witty, full of joy or doom.
I love her shoes, her gloves, her dainty dress;
And all they clasp, and cling to, and caress.

COMPENSATION

PINDAR, the Theban, sang to Hieron
In Doric verse, rich as rough-hammered gold,
The Immortals deal to men, now as of old,
Two ill things for one good. These words, forth blown
From such a trumpet, through the ages groan
A note of misery. And yet I hold
That though they deal us evils manifold
We owe the High Powers gratitude alone.
For one good may be worth a thousand ills;
And all the sum of wretchedness that fills
The travailing earth, the sea, the arching blue
Cannot exceed the wealth of joy that lies
In sweet, low words, in smiles and loving eyes —
Cannot compare with love, if love be true.

ESTRELLA

My love is like a planet in the sky
Whereon a star-seer bends his reverent gaze,
Waiting for those bright moments when its rays
Flame out in beauty; then his raptured eye
May trace its light and shadow; he may try
To pluck in shreds its rainbow-tinted blaze;
But still unknown and vague the planet stays
Throned in the luminous blue, serene and high.
I, though I love and wonder, may not know.
Too lofty for me is that magic lore.
A sacred mystery folds evermore
The thoughts that make her deep eyes flash and glow,
The meaning of that slow smile's dazzling shine,
The sweet, proud lips no kisses can make mine.

INFINITE VARIETY

In my one love are many loves entwined;
Each hour makes me unfaithful to the last;
The beauty present dims the beauty past;
Of her worst rivals is her self combined.
When she is pale, in her dear cheek I find
The fairest shade on earth was ever cast;
And if she blush, that hue is not surpassed
In roses ruffled by the wanton wind.
Sometimes her sweet lips droop to a purpose sad;
Then all my soul in loving sympathy
Burns to dispel her sadness with a kiss;
And when they flash and curve in laughter glad,
Around the corners of her mouth I see
A swarm of hovering loves, sporting in bliss.

TO ONE ABSENT

Only a week ago, heaven bent so near
It bartered greetings with the jocund earth,
The sweet June day was lived with love and mirth,
A world of verdure laughed in summer cheer.
And when night came its charm was doubly dear;
Under that opulent moon joy knew no dearth;
All beautiful and gracious things had birth
In your eyes' cherishing light; — for you were here.
Now all that glow of life is vanished; lorn
The world lies under the cold gleam of morn.
Withered and shrinking in the spectral blue
Hangs the sad moon, a pale and shuddering ghost
Of all that glory in your absence lost —
Fading and waning, love, for lack of you.

SLEEP

I BLESS the power of this charmed summer night,
I bless its magic and its mystery,
Which in ecstatic visions brings to me
The worshiped presence of my soul's delight.
Mine eyes are sealed, but on my clearer sight
Her heaven-bright features shine more radiantly,
Her sweet voice with a richer melody
Enchants the dark, more luminous than light.
I miss the sense of daylight's haunting ills,
Bathed in this lambent tide of sleep and love;
I only see one dazzling image beam,
Shrined in a rosy universe of dream,
Fairer than Dian bending tranced above
The sleeping shepherd on the Latmian hills.

EUTHANASIA

Take from my hand, dear love, these opening flowers.
Afar from thee they grew, 'neath alien skies
Their stems sought light and life in humble wise,
Fed by the careless suns and vagrant showers.
But now their fate obeys the rule of ours.
They pass to airs made glorious by thine eyes.
Smit with swift joy, they breathe, in fragrant sighs,
Their souls out toward thee in their last glad hours,
Paying leal tribute to a brighter bloom.
Thus, and not other, is the giver's fate.
Through years unblest by thee, a cheerless path,
A checkered maze of common glare and gloom,
He came to know in rapture deep though late
How thou couldst brighten life and gentle death.

A PRAYER IN THESSALY

A LOVER prayed to Eros in this wise: —

Since my love loves not me, Eros! I pray
That thou wilt take this torturing love away.
But since she is so fair, still let mine eyes
Unloving, joy in her, her beauty prize;
Still let her clear voice ring as pure and gay
To my calm heart as mating birds in May.

The words went up the blue Thessalian skies.

But ere they reached the high god's golden seat,
The lover to retract his prayer was fain:

Nay, let me keep the bitter with the sweet,
Better than placid bliss is love's dear pain.
My love I'll hold and cherish though it prove
More blighting than the frowning brows of Jove.

ACCIDENTS

A VISION seen by Plato the divine:
Two shuddering souls come forward, waiting doom
From Rhadamanthus in the nether gloom.
One is a slave — hunger has made him pine;
One is a king — his arms and jewels shine,
Making strange splendor in the dismal room.
"Hence!" cries the judge, "and strip them! Let them come
With nought to show if they be coarse or fine."
Of garb and body they are swift bereft:
Such is hell's law — nothing but soul is left.
The slave, in virtue glorious, is held fit
For those blest isles of peace where just kings go.
The king, by vice deformed, is sent below
To herd with base slaves in the wailing pit.

VESPERS

My Star has vanished in the west,
And with it dies the day,
And all the rosy light of life
Is fading into gray.

The sky is full of other stars,
But none to me are dear;
Their silvery light fills all the night,
But still the world is drear.

Far in the west one tender flush
The dim horizon stains,—
A memory of hours that were,
A hope that yet remains.

For, wheeling over many lands
And brightly shining on,
In happier days my Evening Star
Will be my Star of Dawn.

TO THE VESPER SPARROW

Sing the last word of the day!
Voice of the sparrow belated!
What hast thou seen by the way?
What hast thou loved most or hated?
Sadness to melody mated,
What is the grudge thou wouldst pay?

Work, is it sadder than play?
Sorrow or joy sooner sated?
Dreams the sweet blossom of May
To what dull fruitage 't is fated?
When life and death are translated,
Seems Death or Life the more gay?

Linger, shy singer, O stay!
Though the swift night has abated
Sky, lake, and woodland to gray.
Long have we questioned and waited.
Question and answer unmated
Die with the vanishing day.

THY WILL BE DONE

Not in dumb resignation
We lift our hands on high,
Not like the nerveless fatalist,
Content to trust and die.
Our faith springs like the eagle
Who soars to meet the sun,
And cries exulting unto Thee,
O Lord, Thy Will be done!

When tyrant feet are trampling
Upon the common weal,
Thou dost not bid us bend and writhe
Beneath the iron heel.
In Thy name we assert our right
By sword or tongue or pen,
And even the headsman's axe may flash
Thy message unto men.

Thy Will! It bids the weak be strong,
  It bids the strong be just;
No lip to fawn, no hand to beg,
  No brow to seek the dust.
Wherever man oppresses man
  Beneath Thy liberal sun,
O Lord, be there Thine arm made bare,
  Thy righteous will be done.

EROS EPHEMERIS

Enough of thunderous passion
That clouds life's weary way.
Bid now in merrier fashion
The jocund pulses play.
Welcome the airy fancies
That charm and pass away,
The light loves,
The bright loves,
The loves that live a day.

Too rude for mortal bosoms
The storms that rage for aye;
Ask not from frost the blossoms
That deck the laughing May.
Bid welcome all the gay loves
That wither if they stay,
The sweet loves,
The fleet loves,
The loves that live a day.

IS SHE HERE?

He came in victory's lambent flame
'Mid myriad shouts and trumpets' blare,
While the glad people's loud acclaim
Made vocal all the summer air.

But while the cannon's thunder boomed
Half-heard amid the loyal cry,
And starry banners glowed and bloomed
In beauty neath that western sky,

He from the highway turned apart
And to a quiet nook drew near,
The dearest pulses of his heart
Beating the question, "Is she here?"

The glory well and hardly earned
In civic toil and battle's fire
Was all forgotten as he turned
To meet his human heart's desire.

And light as dust lay in the scale
The favor of a flattering world
Weighed by that joy which cannot fail
In love and faith and honor furled.

Like fire within the opal's heart,
Like fragrance in the rose's breast,
A sacred joy, serene, apart,
The highest and the holiest.

MATINS

The trembling pulses of the dawn
Fill with faint glow the violet skies,
And on the moist, day-smitten lawn
The peace of morning lies.

A blessed truce of woe and sin,
A glad surcease of care's annoy;
The waking world has pleasure in
Its matin light and joy.

And all the joy that fills the air,
And all the light that gilds the blue,
I see it in your eyes and hair,
I know it, love, in you.

O'er lips and eyes and golden floss
There floats a charm I cannot reach,
A glimpse of gain, a threat of loss,
Beyond my subtlest speech.

The amethyst flush will fade above
Into the dust-dim glare of noon:
The love of youth, the youth of love,
Will fade and pass as soon.

Kiss close, belov'd! for never yet
Could love its bloom unchanging keep.
There are no hearts but they forget,
There are no eyes but sleep.

SWEETEST AND DEAREST

Vain are all names
To express what thou art,
Gem, rose, or morning-star,
Joy of my heart.
Still do the fond old words
Ring best and clearest —
Thou art my love, my own,
Sweetest and dearest.

Every warm heart-beat chimes
These words to me;
Needless all others
Between me and thee.
In the deep silences
One voice thou hearest —
'T is my heart calling thee
Sweetest and dearest.

REVEILLE

Fly, poppied drowse, away!
  Across the marshes sweep,
Chasing the fallen moon, the shadows gray;
  Make me not laggard, Sleep!

Against the morning move,
  Fronting the reddening miles!
Touch the white eyelids of the girl I love,
  And fill her dreams with smiles.

TWO ON THE TERRACE

Warm waves of lavish moonlight
The Capitol enfold,
As if a richer noon light
Bathed its white walls with gold.
The great bronze Freedom shining,
Her crest in ether shrining,
Peers eastward as divining
The new day from the old.

Mark the mild planet pouring
Her splendor o'er the ground;
See the white obelisk soaring
To pierce the blue profound.
Beneath the still heavens beaming,
The lighted town lies gleaming,
In guarded slumber dreaming —
A world without a sound.

No laughter and no sobbing
From those dim roofs arise,
The myriad pulses throbbing
Are silent as the skies.
To us their peace is given,
The meed of spirits shriven;
I see the wide, pure heaven
Reflected in your eyes.

Ah love! a thousand æons
Shall range their trooping years;
The morning stars their pæans
Shall sing to countless ears.
These married States may sever,
Strong Time this dome may shiver,
But love shall last forever
And lovers' hopes and fears.

So let us send our greeting,
A wish for trust and bliss,
To future lovers meeting
On far-off nights like this,

Who, in these walls' undoing
Perforce of Time's rough wooing,
Amid the crumbling ruin
Shall meet, clasp hands, and kiss.

"RHYMES"

APPARENTLY COMPOSED DURING THE EARLY MONTHS OF THE CIVIL WAR

Sown sparsely through earth's lifetime there are hours
That teem with giant forms of novel powers;
When from an idler century's budding gloom
The petals of an epoch burst to bloom,
Vaguely revealing to the questioning skies
Anthers and spikes of unfamiliar dyes;
When through life's growing woof, run suddenly,
Threads, dim — presageful of the fate to be,
And omens darkly from the distance stray,
Like orient splendors out of morn's dull gray,
Whispering low, as gather from afar
The vague foreshadows of the distant war,
The war-cries heavy with the hate of years
The murmurous clashing of the myriad spears;
Omens that presage not the honest fields
Where alien mottoes mark opposing shields,

Where loyal men-at-arms, with martial glee
With sword blades carve an emperor's decree,
Where trumpets wail and silken banners wave
Proudly and mournfully o'er valor's grave;
Far darker lowers the promise of the fight
Which locks in desperate grapple wrong and right,
Where o'er the legions of embattled hosts
Float the dim shadows of indignant ghosts
Where good and evil armed and regnant stand
Shouting the battle cry to either band,
And men thus fired with hate and vengeance grim
Strive with the sinews of the Anakim
And on the trampled turf distills the stain
That tinged the sod of Armageddon's plain.

At such a time Art sickens through the world,
Song slumbers with lethargic pinions furled,
Listless the painter at his easel stands,
Drops the dulled chisel from the sculptor's hands,
The harp hangs silent with untrembling chords
For deeds are now more eloquent than words.

As, when reluctant night is half-withdrawn,
Steals on the wold the mystery of dawn,
The grove may rustle with unquiet wings
But never a bird from out his covert sings.
But when the routed shadows break and flee
And Light stands victor on the dew-lit lea
Glad in the triumph, from the twittering throng
How pours the jubilant cataract of song!
In this vague twilight poets silent wait
While the stern Sisters chant the runes of fate.
For fuller than the measure of their rhyme
Swells the grand cadence of avenging Time,
And deeper than the trembling of their chords
The Anvil Chorus of the clashing swords.

Not mine the task to wander far away
Into the rose-mists of a happier day,
To re-create beneath these leaden skies
The hues of a forgotten Paradise,
Or soothe the soul with love's voluptuous swells,
Soft as a Lydian dancer's ankle-bells:

Not this. For I have neither will nor power
To scorn the regal summons of the hour
And you 'll forgive the unmelodious rhyme
That beats the jangled rhythm of the time,
For never since the days of that July,
Consecrate through all time to Liberty,
Since the glad light of that grand summer morn
Kissed the bright forehead of an empire born,
Has any hour brought in its flight a freight
So cumbered with the mysteries of fate.

While all the earth in dread suspense is bowed,
We can but watch the piling of the cloud.
Out of its depths no blinding flash has come,
Still sleep inert the inner thunders dumb.
Until this cloud and gloom be overpast
And the torn mist goes sailing down the blast
And the glad earth, green in the springtime rain,
Laughs with the sunshine and the flowers again,
Of fairer themes what man shall dare to sing?
The lute is silent, while the trumpets ring.

And Pleasure's lilt, and Fancy's airy play
Wait for the freedom of a brighter day.

In the proud chronicles of a future age
These passing days will fill the proudest page,
Topping the landmarks of the coming time,
The beacons of to-day will loom sublime.
This is our hour supreme: this storm and stress
Shall blot or vindicate our worthiness.
This is the promise vague of fate's decree
And other hours have been that this might be.

Far back through elder years and distant climes
Shines the stern presage of the passing times.
To keep the truth now periled, bright and pure,
The people fought their King on Marston Moor,
Where curled court darlings sank to death's eclipse —
Sweet names of English ladies on their lips,
And still the tyrant-hating lifestream ran
Hot from the gashed veins of the Puritan.

Charged with the germ of days to come like these,
The Mayflower shivering sailed the wintry seas
And her stern crew beneath that iron sky
Sang their first hymn to God and Liberty.

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